CHRISTIAN THEISM.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "AN INQUIRY CONCERNING THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY."

LONDON:

SMALLFIELD AND SON, 69, NEWGATE STREET.

1839.

1221.

GEORGE SMALLFIELD, PRINTER, 69, NEWGATE STREET.

PREFACE.

THE following are some reflections on the direction which the religious sentiments of men may be expected to take after the relinquishment of their belief in miraculous revelations.

On some occasions old truths have an interest and fitness of application which give them a freshness equal to that of novelty. This must be the excuse for repeating here some things which may have often been said before. To those who have felt compelled to acquiesce in the conclusion referred to with respect to the Christian religion, the truths which can be gathered from Nature come to have a force and a reality which were never before perceived. When we are called upon to decide between Nature's religion and none, it seems to us as if we had not yet sufficiently weighed the import of the lessons conveyed in Creation, and we find in them the interest and value belonging to new discoveries.

These pages may, perhaps, express some of the thoughts to which such a position gives rise; and also tend to shew in what sense Theism and Christianity may unite in name as well as in sympathies.

September 1839.

ERRATUM.

Page 2, line 1, for "other causes than those" read "those causes alone."

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MIRACLE and prophecy are losing their influence over the minds of men; they are no longer put forward as the impregnable bulwarks of religion, but are withdrawn to a more secure place in the background. Their strength as armour is mistrusted; and they are preserved with the jealous care due to venerated but fragile relics. The tone of confident appeal to the supposed unimpeachable evidence on their behalf, is succeeded by an imploring deprecation of the rashness which should root up a belief on the whole beneficial, or by a discreet silence. The imagination may still linger over the ancient and pleasing fictions, so long intertwined with the religious feelings of all the nations who have drawn their creeds from Palestine; but calm reason is unable to acknowledge them longer as facts. A dispassionate examination persuades us that there is no sufficient ground for believing that that land, more than others, has witnessed interruptions or suspensions of the laws of nature: the closest investigation fails to support the wondrous tales, the power of which over the imagination and heart was enhanced by the solemnity of religious sanction: we recognize with some disappointment, that although men in every land have been liable to mistake, exaggerate, or deceive, the sun and moon have, in all probability, ever pursued their regular course over the valleys of Judea; that attraction of gravitation has probably never ceased to operate on the sea of Galilee; nor the human frame, in the region from Idumea to Tyre and Sidon, to be affected by

other causes than those which fall within the limits of the physical and organic laws of nature.

Yet, after having arrived at this result, the inquirer presently sees the horizon begin to clear, and many difficulties which had hitherto enveloped religion break up and disperse. Subjects most interesting to mankind no longer appear clogged with absurdities, which the utmost ingenuity of scholarship could not reduce into a shape admissible before reason; the progress of moral science is no longer impeded by the necessity of accommodating conclusions to a collection of written precepts; nor the supply of mental strength made dependent on the reception of tales of the most difficult verification. At the same time, whatever of real moral value was contained in Christianity and its records may be retained; nor does the important modification of opinions alluded to, appear even to bring with it the necessity of running counter to the feelings of this age and country by a renunciation of the Christian name. It must rejoice the lover of peace as well as of truth, to feel convinced that there is no inconsistency in retaining a name in favour of which there are such strong, and on many accounts deserved, prepossessions, amongst the mass of his countrymen and benevolent men of every clime; and that this minor point need not contribute to a separation in feeling and action, which the difference of opinion alone would not have occasioned.

Even those more liberal Christians, who have been willing to admit that many different opinions might coexist within the pale of Christianity, have generally taken it for granted that a belief in its miraculous origin at least was essential. But a close attention to the history of Jesus Christ will shew that this distinction is perfectly arbitrary; and that a total disbelief of miracles and prophecy no more disqualifies a man for bearing with propriety and consistency the Christian name, than any other deduction from the exuberant belief which places

him in the Triune Godhead. The most striking points in Christ's career and preaching shew, that contribution to human improvement constitutes the most prominent title to the name of Christian, regarded merely in an etymological and historical sense; and that, if the benevolent Deist feels inclined to honour the Jewish reformer by perpetuating his name in this honourable connexion with philanthropy, he may do so without even historical inaccuracy.

By some the essence of Christianity has been supposed to consist in the acknowledgment of Jesus as God, or the Son of God; by others, in looking to his death as an atonement for the sins of the world; by others, in the belief that he was raised from the dead, or that he was a man approved of God by miracles, wonders, and signs;—in all which views, men appear to have been more regardful of what was said by the followers of Christ, immediate or subsequent, than of that which formed his own main purpose during his life.

The earliest and original doctrine of Christianity, the feature which characterized the infant religion at its birth, that which John the Baptist preached even before Jesus came, which Jesus himself made the chief topic of almost every discourse, and which he bade his followers proclaim in every town from Galilee to Jerusalem, accords with the views of every benevolent man. Prepare for the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven approaches. Pray that the reign of God may come *on earth* as it is in heaven.

Amidst the many evils which disfigure the present aspect of mankind, men find a satisfaction in turning to the beautiful imaginary picture of a state of human innocence and perfection. To the frequent manifestations of the lower feelings which must occur during an imperfect state of human nature, a pleasing contrast is presented by the contemplation of a period, when all the noxious

features of the human character shall have disappeared, and the face of society shall present a rich moral landscape of virtue and happiness. This contemplation is the more natural, inasmuch as the moral world seems hitherto evidently behind the natural in point of perfection. The one seems to be nearer than the other to the perfection of which its nature admits. All the different views of nature contain something to please us; the corn field, the meadow, or the deep blue sea, may have more of tranquil beauty; yet even the wild heath, the barren desert, the storm, and the volcano, gratify our sense of the vast and sublime. But in much of the moral world, in the insincerity, meanness, and hard unscrupulous selfishness, which prevail to a great extent, there is nothing to gratify any perceptions within us; and we are tempted to inquire if both proceeded from the same creator, or if he was here less able to repel the encroachments of Arimanes than in physical nature. Nevertheless, amidst all the deformity of which we complain, enough of beauty is seen to persuade us that both kinds of creation proceed from a source in which benevolence at least was preponderant; and we recognize the impress of the same God in the star and hill, and in the body and mind of man. Hence the disproportion which strikes us, in the apparent amount of evil in the two creations, suggests, that the moral world does not at present exhibit the entire plan which the Creator had in view in its formation; that it has either fallen from the perfect state in which it issued from his hand, or not yet arrived at that full growth which he contemplated as its ultimate destination.

The moral sentiments having existed in some degree in all ages and countries, whilst unfortunately there has never been wanting a sufficient quantity of violence and fraud to shock them, these thoughts have appeared in different forms amongst many nations, but generally under one or other of those referred to, viz. a state of

perfection already past, or one which is yet to come; a golden age at the beginning, or one at the end of the world.

The idea appears in some parts of the poetical writings of the Jews, called the Prophets, who represent the imagined state of happiness as still to come, and to be revealed in the times of the end, or in the day of the Lord. The representations of it in these writings are more interesting to us than any others, because from them are derived principally those ideas and doctrines which, although now owing to a long series of modifications their identity is hardly to be recognized, have exercised under the name of Christianity such an important influence over mankind. Let us, then, recall the views on this subject of those whom Christ and the apostles quoted as high authorities, the Jewish prophets.

The book of Isaiah frequently represents that it will be the peculiar distinction of Jacob, to spread the knowledge of his God and peace throughout the earth.

Ch. ii. 2—4: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Speaking of the future king of the stem of Jesse, who is to restore the peace and glory of Israel, he says, that in his days,

"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,

and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."—Chap. xi. 6—9.

In the magnificent description of Israel's future glory, chap. lx. all the other nations of the earth are to derive enlightenment from the favoured nation.

Isaiah lx. 1—3: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, for behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

Chap. lxi. 11: "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations."

In the vision of Daniel, the last kingdom of the saints of the Most High is to extend over the whole earth.

Dan. vii. 13, 14: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Micah, after lamenting the vices and sufferings of Israel in his own time, repeats the splendid anticipation of Isaiah concerning the last days.

Mic. iv. 3, 4: "..... nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it."

The sentiments in the other prophets, and even in some parts of those here quoted, are much inferior to the above; and in general it must be allowed that the most exalted Jewish ideas, respecting the earth's expected improvement, were mingled with a large mass of mere

national prejudice and vanity. The kingdom of God was hardly contemplated with so much satisfaction as being the universal reign of righteousness, as for the sake of that triumphant empire which Jacob should then assert over the nations that had oppressed him, and that glorious sceptre which David's great successor should sway over the whole earth. If the nations were to be brought to righteousness, it was to be by means of the law proceeding from Zion. If in the day of the Lord the Gentiles were to rejoice in the light of the Holy One of Israel, the same day was to behold the confusion of his adversaries, and to be a day of the Lord's vengeance on behalf of Israel. Nevertheless, the sublimity of the views to which these writings occasionally reach, may lead us to overlook the Jewish prejudices with which they abound, and in some degree, to join in the estimation in which they have so long been held.

Jesus Christ learned from the prophets the idea of a future state of perfection on earth, called the Kingdom of heaven, improved it from the resources of his own higher moral nature, and brought all the powers of a fertile eastern imagination to illustrate it so as to awaken the enthusiasm of his hearers. He delighted to portray the kingdom in a variety of forms, and with the imagery naturally proceeding from Jewish habits of thought. The multitudes listened with delight to discourses which for a moment raised their minds to ideas above their usual level, and to views of which the grandeur was probably augmented by not being clearly defined. Many of every class, from the Galilean fisherman to the member of the Sanhedrim, loved to hear the prophet of Nazareth expatiate on his favourite theme, and looked for the approach of that Kingdom in which the will of God should be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The following is a recapitulation of the principal texts in the four Gospels referring to the Kingdom of heaven:—

Matt. iii. 2: John the Baptist preaches repentance, as a preparation for the kingdom. iv. 17: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." v. 3—12: Humility, mercifulness, and patience in suffering, necessary in order to attain the kingdom. Ver. 19, 20: Doing and teaching his commandments confer greatness in the kingdom. Greater righteousness than that of the Scribes and Pharisees necessary. vi. 10: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." vi. 33: "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." vii. 21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." viii. 11, 12: "Many shall come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." ix. 35: Jesus preaches the gospel of the kingdom, and heals diseases, in many cities and villages. x. 7: Appoints twelve apostles to preach the kingdom through the cities of Israel. xi. 11: "The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist." Ver. 12: "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." xii. 28: "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." xiii.: Parable of the sower. Perseverance in the midst of temptations necessary to attain the kingdom. The multitude does not understand its mysteries. The kingdom of heaven likened to the field of good seed and tares; in the end of the world the wicked shall be cast into a furnace of fire, and the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Like to a grain of mustard-seed;—to leaven;—to a treasure hid in a field;—to a pearl of great price;—to a net gathering of every kind; at the end of the world the wicked shall be separated from the just. xvi. 19: The keys of the kingdom promised to Peter. Ver. 28: "Some here shall not taste death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." xviii. 2—4: To be humble as little children qualifies for the kingdom. Ver. 23—35: In the kingdom of heaven there will be a reckoning, and those who have shewn mercy will obtain it. xix. 12: "Some eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive the saying, let him receive it." Ver. 23: "A rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven." Ver. 28: Promise of twelve thrones to the apostles, in the regeneration. xx. 1—16: Parable of the vineyard; the last labourers made equal to the first. 20—28: Jesus rebukes Zebedee's children, who sought places of distinction in his kingdom. xxi. 1—11: Rides into Jerusalem, as the predicted lowly King of Zion. Ver. 31: "The publicans and harlots go into the

kingdom before" the chief priests and elders. Ver. 43: Those who reject the Messiah, threatened that the kingdom shall be given to others. xxii. 1—14: The kingdom like a marriage feast; the guests refusing to come, and murdering the king's servants, he destroys them, and invites others. xxiii. 13: "The Scribes and Pharisees shut up the kingdom against men." xxiv. 14: "The gospel of the kingdom to be preached in all the world, and then the end shall come." xxv.: Parable of the ten virgins. The kingdom will be revealed unexpectedly. The Lord will require increase for his talents. The Son of man, sitting on the throne of his glory, will divide men into the two classes of righteous and wicked. xxvi. 29: Jesus will not drink wine again until he drinks it new in his Father's kingdom. Ver. 64: Jesus tells the high priest, "the Son of man will be seen hereafter sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

The texts in Mark and Luke, merely corresponding with those in Matthew, are omitted.

Mark i. 15: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." 26—29: The kingdom like seed growing secretly to a full harvest. xii. 34: The Scribe who loved God and his neighbour, not far from the kingdom of God. xv. 43: Joseph of Arimathea, one of those who "waited for the kingdom of God."

Luke i. 33: The child Jesus "shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." iv. 43: Jesus says, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent." ix. 62: "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." xii. 32: It is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom to the little flock of disciples. xiv. 15: A guest exclaims, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Jesus answers by the parable of the supper, of which the poor and blind and lame were brought to partake, instead of those first invited. xvii. 20, 21: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there; for behold the kingdom of God is within (among) you." xix. 11: On arriving at Jerusalem, the disciples thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear. Parable of the nobleman who was rejected by his citizens, obtains a kingdom elsewhere, and returns to reckon with his servants, and take vengeance on his enemies. xxi. 31: When Jerusalem is trodden down, and signs appear in the heavens, the kingdom of God will be nigh. xxiii. 42: The malefactor says to Jesus, "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom."

John i. 49: "Nathanael saith, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou

art the King of Israel." iii. 3: Jesus says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Ver. 5: "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." xviii. 36: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."*

Jesus made *virtue* the chief qualification for partaking of the kingdom of heaven. To love God and one's neighbour, was to be not far from the kingdom of God. And he laid particular stress on virtues of the meek and benevolent kind. Blessed are the *meek,* for they shall inherit the earth.....Blessed are the *peace-makers,* for they shall be called the children of God..... Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Those who in spirit are like little children, rather than the contenders for greatness, are fit for the kingdom of God. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love to one another." "Love your enemies." In all this, Jesus accords strikingly with the most advanced morality of the present age, which admits that the prevalence of these dispositions is the most essential requisite to the improvement of the world.

Moreover, although Jesus seems to have held the common Jewish notion of the exaltation of Israel, there are indications that, in his view, the righteous throughout the world would be partakers of the kingdom. In the parable of the tares, the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom.—Mat. xiii. 38. The kingdom is like a net cast into the sea, which gathered fish of every kind. Ver. 47.†

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* The probability of some interpolations of later views, acquired by the church after the fall of Jerusalem, with the sayings of Jesus himself, especially in the last Gospel, is considered, ch. vi. and xvi., of "An Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity."

† There is much difficulty in distinguishing accurately the

These excellent and enlightened views are enough to secure to Jesus the permanent respect of moralists, although it be admitted that he added to them some notions peculiarly Jewish, or of inferior merit.

Jesus Christ, after a very short career, was put to death, a victim to the political suspicions which he had excited; and the state of things, which he had announced, was found not to be near at hand. His followers continued for a time to expect a kingdom of heaven, to be revealed in some extraordinary manner. Experience and reason have long set aside this expectation as chimerical; but at the same time they convince us, that the tendency of the world is actually towards the realization of the conception described, a state of happiness and perfection on earth; and that the proper means of bringing it to pass, are human efforts in the cause of charity and knowledge. Thus the labourers in this cause are the only real fulfillers of the intention of Jesus. They are in effect bringing about that which Jewish imagination called Messiah's reign; they are obeying in the most efficient manner Christ's most urgent command; and may therefore with peculiar propriety be called after that name, which, in reference to the future kingdom, was assumed by him.

Undoubtedly, the views of Jesus were in some respects very different from those of the modern moralist. The expectation of a miraculous introduction of the kingdom,* and of his own exaltation as Messiah, naturally gave to

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views of Jesus himself on this point, both from a probable modification in his own teaching, after the arrival at Jerusalem and the non-acknowledgment of his Messiahship by the Jews; and from the probable introduction of the more enlarged views of the church after the admission of the Gentiles. See some reflections on this subject, 16th chap. of "An Inquiry," &c.

* This subject is considered, ch. xvi. of "An Inquiry," &c.

his teaching a general tendency to excitement and to a disregard of the common engagements of life.* With every allowance too for eastern style, it may be questioned if the virtues of humility and reliance upon providence† are not enforced to an extent inconsistent with self-respect, prudence, and energy of character. There is a general depreciation of the common enjoyments of earth; poverty and suffering seem to be held up as actually desirable, in preference to a happy earthly life, for the sake of obtaining a better title to a future reward.‡ This future reward, whether in the kingdom about to be revealed, or in an unseen state in heaven, is urged as the proper object of men's constant thought and desire.§ The duty of self-denial seems to be inculcated to an extent‖ more consistent with the spirit of monachism,

* His hearers are repeatedly commanded to forsake their kindred and occupations in order to follow him. He says to the multitudes, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all he hath, he cannot be my disciple:" Luke xiv. 25—33. The young man, who had kept the commandments, and was apparently making good use of his riches, is commanded, "if he will be perfect, to sell what he has and give to the poor, and to follow him:" Matt. xix. 18—22. Marriage is not prohibited, but it is desirable for those who seek the kingdom of heaven to abstain from it. Matt. xix. 10—12.

† Matt. v. 38—41; vi. 25—34. By comparing these precepts with some similar rabbinical proverbs in use among the Jews about the time of Christ, it appears unlikely that he intended them to be understood in that merely figurative sense which modern commentators usually affix to them. See Inquiry, ch. xvii. pp. 341—348.

‡ Luke vi. 20—26. Blessed be ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled, &c.... But woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation, &c. In the parable of Lazarus, Abraham appears to represent to the rich man, that he is tormented because he had received good things in his life-time, not because he had misused those good things: Luke xvi. 25.

§ Matt. vi. 19—21.

‖ Matt. xvi. 24—26; Luke ix. 23—25.

than with that cheerful morality which would enlarge, rather than restrict, the bounds of innocent enjoyment. It seems not unlikely that Jesus, notwithstanding his general intellectual superiority and more liberal nature, had not entirely lost that estimation of monastic austerity and excessive heavenly-mindedness, which characterized the whole body of the Essenes. Hence those individuals or sects, in the Christian world, who have striven to attain a close conformity to the *whole* of the precepts of Jesus, have usually found themselves in a singular or isolated position with respect to the society around them, whose less stringent faith impeded but slightly the operation of natural reason and feeling. For these reasons, it is possible that the precepts of the Gospels may not appear a complete and safe code of morality to the philanthropist or legislator who deems, that the appointed chief object of human effort is the increase of happiness and improvement upon this earth.

It is true also, that the doctrine to which we have referred, soon ceased to be the most conspicuous feature in the early church. The followers of Jesus, after some time, thought it of more consequence to assert the resurrection and apotheosis of their lost master, and the eternal reward prepared for his disciples, than to adhere to his own most prominent doctrine. The expectation held by Jesus of an approaching speedy fulfilment of his anticipations, would not lead him to enjoin the proclamation of these anticipations as the permanent distinguishing doctrine of his followers; and they were naturally led to adopt as their leading tenets those which the progress of events and opinions rendered most interesting.

It may be asked why, on this hypothesis of imperfect views and mixed motives on the part of the Founder of Christianity, this age should be inclined to render him any allegiance whatever, and to connect his name more than those of many other reformers, possibly more wise

and enlightened, with the cause of human improvement? If he were not God, nor the Son of God, nor a prophet, not even the wisest philosopher, or most perfect moral being that we can conceive of; if he were, in fact, only a Jewish peasant of intellect, imagination, and moral feeling, much, although not immeasurably, above the standard of his age and country; why should his name be enshrined in this costly manner more than those of many other philanthropists, which would now be scarcely recognized by any but the students of biographical dictionaries?

Because the Christian system, in addition to such intrinsic excellence as it possesses, has been long interwoven with some of the best affections of mankind, and has been forced upon their notice by a striking series of events. There may be writers who have drawn up theories of morals more complete, and more invariably correct, than that which can be collected from the New Testament. But human nature is so constructed, that other things besides correctness give a man's opinions a title to perpetual remembrance. Action in the world, even more than thought in the closet, contributes to an enduring memorial. If Jesus had merely written in a formal treatise what he could say concerning morals, his name might never perhaps have reached us: certainly it would have attracted less notice than that of the more copious and systematic Jewish moralist, Jesus the son of Sirach. But he also stood forth as a public reformer, opposed his own more liberal spirit to the bigotry of his time, arrested men's attention by assuming the remarkable character of Messiah, and died a martyr. In his own personal career, he illustrated much of his precepts, and especially faith in heaven as the philosophy of suffering. The romance and pathos thus attached to his history, have given him a hold upon faculties of men more powerful than mere reason, and stamped all that proceeds from him with a weight and interest which the

mass of mankind would be slow to feel in mere philosophical merit. The hero of tales like those of the four Gospels, must ever be listened to with more attention than one who issues the most luminous disquisitions from the closet. So also the followers of Jesus were not merely writers, but by means of their organization, missions, and purity of life, revolutionized the human mind throughout the Roman empire, and reared the reformed Judaism amidst the ruins of polytheism and heathen philosophy. A long train of events of great historical importance is traced back to the lives of the Nazarene and his friends. From them has proceeded a succession of remarkable developments of the human mind. The early churches, with their affectionate spirit of brotherhood, and the pompous hierarchies which afterwards trod on the necks of princes; the desert cell of the solitary Egyptian, and the gorgeous cathedral with its solemn music and slow-moving trains of priests and virgins; the councils of mitred and imperial metaphysicians, as well as associations of practical philanthropists; the bigotry of inquisitions and crusades, as well as the calm resignation which in cloistered walls fixes its last hope on heaven; all these are amongst the indices pointing to the immense influence, political and moral, which has been exercised upon the world for eighteen centuries by the Cross.

It is not easy to decide the question, whether Christianity has hitherto produced more good or evil in the world. The varying systems of doctrines, which have passed under the name, may be considered as so many exciting causes, which, according to the prevailing dispositions of men, have promoted the growth of good or evil actions. The savage warrior of feudal times felt the name of Jesus chiefly as an incentive to exterminate the enemies of the Cross; the humane philanthropist has endeavoured to honour the same name by traversing lands and seas to relieve the oppressed. The spirit of enter-

prise, war, and cruelty, would be impelled by its Christianity to a crusade, and choose for its favourite texts, "I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword;" and "He that hateth not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Benevolence would be quickened by the Gospel to a more active cultivation of the charities of life, and, throwing a veil over its harsher features, would select for its mottoes, "Do good unto all men," "Love your enemies." In the same manner, the desire of eternal salvation has added vehemence to the spirit of persecution on the one hand, and given consistency and perseverance to charitable effort on the other. The close connexion which Christianity establishes between mind and its invisible source, has tended to withdraw the unsocial spirit still deeper into morose solitude; whilst, in the more kindly disposed, it has added to the character the charm arising from the capacity for the devotional sentiment. Thus may we find a Torquemada and a Las Casas appealing to the same Gospel; nor is it easy even for the most impartial to ascertain the balance of good or evil which it has been the means of drawing forth, during the few stages of man's history, which have yet witnessed its operation. Yet, if it be admitted that stagnation is the worst evil which can befal the human mind, a system, which has called forth so many powerful energies, has at least a claim to prior consideration, even though these energies may have been hitherto in great part misdirected.

It is impossible to estimate Christianity fairly by reviewing the conduct of its professed votaries in past ages; since history evidently does not supply the means of separating accurately that part of their conduct which was produced by their Christianity, from that which originated in their own inherent dispositions or other circumstances. We must appeal to the judgment of the

enlightened modern moralist on the tendency of the New Testament, consisting of the story of Jesus and his disciples, and their precepts. Does he find the prevailing sentiments arising from the study of these records, upon the whole greatly favourable to his views? Does he find in them so much that is accordant with truth and virtue, that it is desirable to retain the name of Christ and the Scriptures as useful and powerful allies, in all those schemes for human improvement which the increased knowledge of modern times sanctions?

Now, it will scarcely be denied by the attentive reader of the New Testament, that even though there be some things which he may regard with doubt or disapprobation, there is much which awakens the best feelings more powerfully than could be effected by the most correct formal treatise on morals. Here, in the pleasing style of eastern apophthegm and parable, we find pictures of the final triumph of righteousness; the principle of benevolence enforced in a manner which allows of its application to the most extended views of the promoter of social improvement; and a general inculcation of the milder virtues which humanize mankind. The contemplation of the Deity is recommended under an aspect agreeable to reason, and congenial to the wants of the mind. Adversity meets with sympathy, and is directed to doctrines most calculated to give strength and patience, submission to the Divine will, and the hope of a future state. All this appears here with the weight due to things spoken by men who have acted an important part in the world; here, both romance and reality combine to impart interest to the precept. Where shall we find the dissertation on moral sentiments which speaks like the Gospels; where the professor of ethics who appeals to us with the same force as the inimitable Galilean, who teaches from the mount and the sea-side; is comforted by angels, the spirits which minister heaven's secret aid

to the soul; and—the inevitable anticipation of human nature on behalf of dying merit—rises from the dead, and ascends to the right hand of God?

With no hostility, then, towards Christ and Christianity may the Theist renounce his faith in miracles and prophecy; and without inconsistency may he be willing that the long train of associations which Christianity possesses with the history, the literature, the poetry, the moral and religious feelings of mankind, should long contribute their powerful influences in behalf of the cause of human improvement. Let all benefactors of mankind continue to look to Jesus as their forerunner in this great cause, and recognize a kindred mind in the Galilean who preached lessons of wisdom and benevolence in an early age of the world, and fell a sacrifice to the noble idea of introducing a kingdom of heaven upon earth. Let the good Samaritan still be cited as the example of humanity; the passover-supper be remembered as the farewell of Jesus to his friends; and God be worshiped under the character which he attributed to him,—the Father in heaven. Let painting and music still find solemn themes in the realities and fables relating to Jesus; let feasts and holidays still take their names from the events of his life, our time be dated from his birth, and our temples be surmounted by his cross.

Christianity, then, has been neither evil nor useless; but out of it will proceed a further mental growth. The religion of Egypt, Judaism, Christianity, and the more advanced system, which at a future time may, by the appearance of some remarkable individual, or combination of events, come to be designated by another name,—are all so many successive developments of the religious principle, which, with the progress of mankind, will assume a form continually approaching nearer to perfect truth. And in proportion as other religions make the same approximation, it will be gradually recognized that

God hath made all nations of one mind, as well as of one blood, to dwell upon all the face of the earth.

In this early age of the world, it is impossible to foresee the whole of the creed at which unimpeded reason will ultimately arrive on the subject of religion. On this, more than on any other subject, the love of pure truth has been checked by interest, prejudice, and fear. The pressing wants of the human mind in this respect, co-existing with ignorance, have enabled the artful and ambitious to make religion peculiarly an instrument for their purposes; whilst the love of ease has led the mass of mankind to acquiesce readily in an usurpation, which, whatever were its inconveniences, pretended to satisfy fully their spiritual wants. To submit to authority, with all its burdensome terms, has been found by the world in general an easier bargain than to incur the labour of thought; and those who preferred the latter could only expect to be regarded, even amidst the loudest proclamations of liberty of conscience, with the dislike naturally felt towards those whose conduct tends to render men dissatisfied with a favourite purchase. And the more so, since this purchase was felt by the many to be the only means in their power of satisfying their want. Whilst nature was imperfectly understood, and the intellectual powers were but little cultivated, the many felt themselves incapable, by means of their own native powers, of drawing clearly from the universe around them the conclusions which occasionally seemed to break indistinctly upon them, but which their minds required in full assurance. Earth and skies continually suggested the idea of a First Cause, the knowledge of which seemed to be a natural want of the mind, and must influence materially the conduct. But was this instinctive feeling to be taken as full evidence of the existence of that

towards which it was directed?—and if not, how should minds oppressed with worldly cares, uneducated, or having but imperfect help from science, work out such a vast conclusion from their own resources? A word from Heaven would aid their weakness, solve their doubts, and afford them the delight of faith, without the trouble of acquiring it. What wonder, then, that men professing to have received this message from heaven, or to be its interpreters, should find a ready submission to their claims, succeed in having them admitted without a very rigid scrutiny, and continue to find docile recipients even long after they had begun, instead of bread, to give stones? During the ages of mankind's moral and intellectual minority, it seems indeed natural that authority, derived from the ascendancy of some few superior individuals, should exercise guardianship over the human mind, and provide its necessary food until full-grown reason should be able both to guide and nourish itself. Hence the philanthropist regards with complacency the various Revelations which have afforded to men spiritual supplies, although not of unmixed purity; and hears, in the supposed direct voices from heaven, prelude-sounds of the voice which speaks through nature and reason in a tone rising slowly into clearness in the lapse of ages.

But in time the human mind feels disposed to claim its birthright of free judgment, and takes pleasure in the task of providing for its own wants. It finds a necessity not only to live, but to think. It looks upon the forest, the hill, and the star, not only as a panorama intended to give a momentary gratification to the eye, but as volumes calling to deep thought. It sees that the universe gradually unrolls a succession of lessons which speak both to the intellect and to the heart, and conjectures that there may still lie some of surpassing importance, at present unsuspected, beneath the material surface of things. These, the sustained labour of the human mind

for many centuries will have to bring to light; nor does it appear a strange dispensation that moral wealth, any more than physical, should be the result of the accumulated earnings of many generations, by means of labour in itself pleasing and beneficial.

It would be unreasonable to expect that the ultimate conclusions of the mind on religious subjects, should accord fully with any one of those early substitutes for developed reason, called Revelations. But as these could not have obtained prevalence unless they were, to a great extent, in accordance with some natural human sentiments, it may be conjectured that, in some important features at least, they will be found to agree with the conclusions referred to.

The first question which occurs, after renouncing revelation, is, whether it be in reality necessary or natural to the mind to have any religion at all. Why should we seek the unseen, when there is so much actually before the eye? Does not the world, cognizable by our senses, afford enough to interest, occupy, and direct us, during our threescore years and ten? Does not nature supply ample materials to delight the senses, science to employ the intellect, and the results of conduct enough to engage us on the side of virtue? Can any thing more than this be of any practical value? May it not be a delusion to suppose that there is any real Existence beyond what appears; or, at least, that such Existence is any concern of ours? If there be a God, and if it were intended that we should know him and think of him, would he not have published himself in such clear characters as none could overlook? Cease, then, to fatigue thyself with abstractions: thyself and the things around thee are real, but the unseen is a visionary speculation. Cease thy restless and unsatisfying researches into the cause of things, and be content with the study of things themselves: release thy mind from its painful efforts to reach

what either is not, or is not by thee attainable; use and enjoy all the good within thy reach; view thyself as one small pivot in a machine of which it is no business of thine to discover the origin or the object; find in mankind and nature the only proper spheres of action and thought; and dare to confess to thyself, if not to a prejudiced and insincere world, "to me there is no God."

Yet the mind cannot rest here. It feels that such reasoning calls upon it to restrict some of its highest powers from their due exercise. To rest contented with what we see, is not in man. No dogma ever imposed by the most wanton church authority ever met with so much opposition, as would be encountered in the attempt to restrict men from inquiring into and forming theories concerning the Cause of the immense effects around them. In proportion as the mind awakes into life, it demands some kind of answer to the questions, What is the cause of all being?—and, Have we any thing to do with this cause? The indolent will fly to the nearest or most familiar authority for satisfaction; but few, who have once discovered the want, can be content to leave the vacancy entirely unfilled. Every view of nature revives the questions; the beautiful and sublime in the earth and heavens are felt to be something beneath the powers of man, if regarded only as affording gratification to the senses and fancy; deeper chords lie in him waiting to be struck; and what he sees must ere long suggest to him the knowledge and love of the unseen.

It cannot be denied that this train of thought is not entered into readily at all times, or by all. A large proportion of mankind, including many of the moral and talented, are too much occupied with active pursuits to bestow more than a slight passing attention on such abstract subjects as the cause of things, the nature of the Deity, and the like. These subjects they leave to the clergy. Their importance even makes men unwilling to

touch them with that insufficient degree of thought which they have been able to bestow upon them. Hence some questions of the deepest interest lose the benefit of that free unrestrained discussion which is the surest method of evolving truth. The reverence which keeps men at a distance makes them also lose sight of an object; to keep up an interest, they must be allowed to approach and inspect. Neutrality, however, arising from these causes, is not indifference. Although disinclined to dwell frequently upon religious subjects, most of the practical men referred to, the promoters of the business of the world, admit their importance in regard to individual and social happiness. The legislator or citizen may have seldom thought upon the proofs of the existence of an Intelligent first cause; he has neither had time to study the arguments of natural theology, nor the evidences of revelation: but he is able to appreciate some of the effects which the recognition of a God produces upon the moral condition of men; he feels that such a belief is satisfactory to the mind, and comes in aid of every plan for improving society. He judges of the tree by its fruits. Unable himself to discover the root, he yet concludes that the source from which proceed so many ramifications bearing palpable and useful effects, cannot itself be a mere visionary abstraction, existing only in the brains of theologians and metaphysicians. His short reasoning is,—I see that it is well for men to believe that God is; therefore he is. Yet, conscious of some deficiency in this reasoning, he gladly receives the assistance which any well-reputed authority offers; and especially welcomes that, which, from antiquity, vested interests, and the countenance of large influential bodies of men, appears to him to have had hitherto the greatest weight,—the revealed Word of God.

The conduct, then, of the majority of enlightened and benevolent practical men, who devote but little attention

to religious subjects, is not a proof of latent Atheism, but proceeds rather from a persuasion either that such subjects are out of their sphere, or have been already determined upon by higher authority. Truths of this kind, they admit, are of great practical importance; but it is their part to act quickly, rather than to think deeply: the divine presence is not felt in the crowd, nor the divine voice distinguished amidst the hum of men. Let him who has leisure seek for truth in the groves, endeavour to catch those whispers of Nature which are only heard in her most lonely recesses, and impart the precious oracles to the world.

Solitude is indispensable to deep thought, and consequently to the discovery of truth. The laws of gravitation were discovered by much patient calculation and reflection, apart from the multitude. Hence it would be no objection to the doctrine of an Intelligent first cause, if it were admitted that it is not obvious at first sight; that by men of the world it is held chiefly in deference to authority, or for the sake of expediency; and that a real conviction of its truth is attained only by the few who are able to retire into themselves to think. The tendency of abstract truths to fade away from the mind, when engaged in active pursuits, is no argument against their reality. The laws of Kepler, which appeared so clear and striking to the student in his observatory, may be remembered as uninteresting and even doubtful visions, after he has been for a long time immersed in things nearer to the senses, and forgotten the demonstration on which they rested; but let him retire again into the stillness of nature, and endeavour to descry again the lost planetary characters;—by degrees they come out into brightness and magnitude, and display again the astonishing declaration in full distinctness. So may it be with a greater revelation than these,—the existence of God. Nature bears it inscribed in all parts; but man is not able immediately to read it. By degrees only he learns

the characters which convey the deep sense, and what he has learned by intent meditation occasionally seems to fade away: nevertheless Nature still remains; and whatever truths she really bears inscribed, must continually re-appear to him who seeks her, and, in the end, be brought out in clearness to the whole world. The hieroglyphics are ineffaceable; the tablet is continually within view; time, then, must ever bring men nearer to Nature's great revelation, the full knowledge of God.*

Atheism asserts that we have no right to infer the existence of any thing more than what appears to our senses. The Universe exists, and may be called God, if we will; but where and what is God, distinct from the universe? This great Whole exists;—why, we can no more tell than we can why there should always have been an universal Nothing: but how is the difficulty removed by supposing an imaginary being distinct from the universe, whom we call its Creator? The problem is merely shifted, for we can no more account for this being's existence, than we could for that of the universe. What caused God, is as hard to answer as, what caused the universe. We may as well acquiesce in ignorance at the first step. Unless we invent another cause which caused God, and continue to suppose preceding causes *ad infinitum*, it is evident that we must somewhere be content to admit a first uncaused cause; and why not admit it at once in that which appears before us as a palpable fact, this material universe itself, of which we and all things are parts? What necessity for imagining an intelligent creator? Of ten million possible forms of matter, we see

* The religion of the universe consists in knowing God; and that knowledge is not a simultaneous burst of light, or lights, upon the mind, but an accumulation of particulars perpetually increasing; and hence it is in conformity with the slow but certain intellectual advancement of man.—*Dr. Fellowes' Religion of the Universe*, p. 121.

the one which is. The universe exists; every thing that exists must have certain properties; the universe possesses the property of unfolding in succession various forms of matter, organization, and life. All around us is the result of the inherent powers of nature, or, in other words, the necessary properties of the universal matter. To admit that matter exists with these properties, is no more difficult than to admit that it exists at all. If matter exist uncaused, having extension and solidity, it may also exist uncaused, having the property of developing life. Where we can trace the causes of any effects which we see, let us admit them, but not invent fanciful ones. That this wondrous harmonious whole exists, is a fact; that Intelligence caused it, and sits an invisible potentate guiding and directing it,—is a dream.

This is Atheism. It bids us sink into incurious repose respecting unseen causes, as being neither our concern, nor within our reach. And if man could indeed extend his thoughts no farther than to what he saw and touched, he must acquiesce in this barren negation of inquiry. But a prominent part of his nature, the reflective and moral, asserts its right and capacity to penetrate beyond what is seen, and presses Atheism with the further question,—Is it more *reasonable* to suppose that this universe has been produced by Intelligence or not?

If we can imagine ourselves placed in a situation where there was no analogy to guide us, i. e., where we had no experience of the kind of effects which Intelligence is capable of producing, the question might be very difficult to answer. Yet here we should only be compelled to confess ignorance: we should say, we cannot tell whether this universe exists without any cause beyond what we see; it does not appear clearly absurd, although difficult to conceive, that matter should have, of its own nature, a non-intelligent power of developing the various forms

which make up the universe. This power might be either the necessary result of the known properties of matter, extension, solidity, attraction, mobility, and the like, in certain combinations; or it might be some additional property, distinct from all these, but, like them, non-intelligent. This does not at once appear impossible. But neither, on the other hand, does it appear absurd that there should be some further cause for the development of nature, viz., either some property of matter of a *different kind* from those mentioned, or something altogether independent of matter. If Intelligence be proposed as this further cause, we ought to have an example of what it is, and a specimen of the effects which it is known to produce. Then only can we judge whether Intelligence be a proper and probable cause of the effects which we see in the universe.

Now, we have an instance both of what intelligence is, and of the effects which it is capable of producing, viz. in ourselves, and in the results of mankind's inventive powers. The question supposed is answered by an analogy between the effects which human intelligence is known to produce, and those which we see in nature. The progress both of art and science continually strengthens the analogy; that of the former by affording a more complete instance of the known effects of intelligence, that of the latter by extending our knowledge of nature.

Let us imagine ourselves placed before a varied landscape, of which one feature is a noble mansion. The question occurs to us, What caused that mansion? Unless we call in that extreme scepticism which appears sometimes in our disputations, but never in our practice, we reply at once, the intelligence or mind* of the builder,

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* Intelligence, or the reasoning power, is one of the manifestations of Mind; but Mind may include much more, sentiments and affections for instance. I prefer to fall into the use of the more general term, because the same kind of reasoning which leads us

and feel perfectly satisfied with the answer. Although we had not seen that particular mansion built, we had seen other similar artificial structures in the process of building, or we had had opportunities of knowing what means were employed in raising such structures; and in all cases we had invariably found that the mind of a builder was necessary to produce the building. In the particular instance before us, we could not refuse to recognize a similar cause, although unseen to us, without doing violence to that principle of our mental constitution which leads us to infer the connexion of similar causes with similar effects; a principle which is practically admitted as a sure and sufficient basis for the whole reasoning and conduct of life. To the suggestion, that although other mansions were produced by the mind of a builder, yet that particular one might have existed for ever, or come into being without any cause beyond the inherent properties of the materials themselves—we should answer, that hitherto we had had no experience of an instance of this kind, nor any reason to believe that there had ever been such an instance; that consequently we must rest in the conviction which common sense, or reasoning flowing from the natural healthy use of the faculties, forced upon us; viz. a conviction derived from an accessible and abundant analogy.

The mansion, then, was caused by mind;—what caused the other parts of the landscape, the trees, the grass, the water, the sun, and the animals? Analogy forces upon us here, also, the answer,—Mind.

For those appearances in the mansion which indicate

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to infer intelligence in the creating principle, may lead us to infer more. There is no incorrectness in adopting the wider term, because wherever there is intelligence there must be mind; and there is a convenience in giving to the principle referred to a name, which without necessarily implying, allows room for, the further qualities which may appear attributable to it.

to us so irresistibly the agency of mind, the adaptation of materials to each other in such a manner as to produce a beautiful or useful result, are found in greater force and variety in the scenery around. A single leaf, blade of grass, or limb of an animal, when we come to examine it, displays joints, vessels, tubes, and other apparatus, more varied and highly finished than any in the artificial structure and its contents. Yet, in many parts, there is sufficient resemblance to impress us with the conviction of the same kind of mental agency.

This common argument from design does not always strike us with much force when viewing objects in nature, because we forget or overlook the fact, that these objects are each of them the result of an arrangement of very complicated parts. From ignorance or indolence, we are apt to fall into the habit of looking upon a plant, an animal, a planet, or even the universe, as one simple whole or unit, and dispose of all nature with as much ease as if it were one ultimate globule. But science puts before us, in all directions, microscopes, telescopes, and analyzing instruments, and accustoms us to see in all the wholes which present themselves skilful adaptations of numerous parts. In proportion, then, as scientific attainments become familiar and common, men will be able to recognize, without effort, the traces of mind in the various material forms which surround them. At first, the lesson was spelled out with difficulty; but, by long acquaintance with the characters, a meaning is inevitably perceived whenever we glance on a page. Nature, in every part, will at length present to us an easily understood as well as deeply interesting meaning, the evidence of a beneficent mental Energy, manifested in moulding matter into innumerable forms of the beautiful and useful.

Nature, in its most obvious aspects, does not at once impress us with the idea of design. The rocks, the woods, the sea, and the stars, seem thrown together with a wildness and irregularity, which rather leave the idea

of chance. Some degree of science is necessary to the first conceptions of design. The motions of the heavenly bodies, the watering of the earth by means of rain, and the adaptation of the productions of the earth to the wants of animals, present, however, appearances of arrangement open to the slightest observation, and seem to have first led men to the idea of an Intelligent cause. As the observation of nature, or science, proceeds, instances of arrangement multiply on all sides, till the moss on the rudest fragment in the wilderness, or the wave which washes the wildest beach, are found to contain specimens of minute mechanism. Nature is not loquacious, although filled with inexhaustible stores; she presents enough at first sight to attract the thoughtful; but mankind must interrogate and study her for many ages, in order to come at all, perhaps to a thousandth part, of that which she has to communicate. The brilliant appearance of the heavens, and a few of the planetary motions, were enough to reward the gaze of the first Chaldean shepherds; but the persevering assiduity of mankind, from Hipparchus to Herschel, was necessary to procure them an insight into the depths of the universe.

In the present age, science is sufficiently advanced to present abundant instances of harmonious arrangement, whether in earth, seas, or skies. But the conviction of an Intelligent cause does not appear invariably to accompany scientific progress. This may proceed from two causes; first, from a disinclination to exercise the reflecting powers on unseen causes, whilst visible effects present such ample and ready themes of contemplation. Acquiescence in this disposition of mind appears to be the chief argument of Atheism, which does not so much deny the existence of unseen causes, as refuse to enter into the search for them. But it seems improbable that a progressive knowledge of the mental constitution will sanction as true philosophy, that which appears to be a mere restriction of the reflective faculties.

Or, the non-acknowledgment of an Intelligent cause, even after an extensive acquaintance with science, may proceed from that over-scrupulousness, or indecision of mind, which refuses to admit any principle on the ground of high probability, or to receive any proposition whilst the contrary is barely possible. This is extreme scepticism, condemned as unreasonable by the general practice of mankind. The evidences of design in nature, similar to those which appear in art, crowd in upon us from every side. If in the latter case the agency of mind be admitted, why should men demur at admitting it in the former? Perhaps, from a suspicion that the analogy may not be sufficiently close.

In some steam-engines, we find that the steam, after having performed its office in raising and depressing the piston, passes into the condenser, and becomes cold water, being in this state no longer fit for the purposes of the engine. But we find also an apparatus of pipes for conveying this cold water again to the boiler, that very part where there is a provision for converting it again into steam. That this apparatus is the effect of design or mind, we feel convinced of by the sight of it, and should acquire little or no addition to our certainty, if the maker were to stand visibly before us and declare himself as such. Even though we had never seen a steam-engine before, yet our certainty on this point would not be less, if we had been in the habit of witnessing mechanical contrivances.

In the human body, we find that the arterial blood, after having supplied nourishment to various glands, becomes unfit for further use; and we find a system of veins for carrying it back to the heart, that very part which, by a connexion with the lungs, contains a provision for re-converting it into arterial.

Now, the circumstance which compels us to infer mental agency in the former case, the adaptation of parts to produce a certain end, exists equally, at least, in the

latter. We must infer mental agency here also by the law of our nature, which compels us to infer similar causes from similar effects.

As in the various works of human art we recognize the *same kind* of mental agency, which we call intelligence, although in different degrees, according as the works are better or worse contrived, and, for aught we know, combined with different accompanying qualities in each artificer; so do we recognize the same kind of agency, intelligence, in nature, although here it may be of a different degree, and possibly combined in the artificer with other qualities different from those belonging to human inventors.

In examining the *columnæ carneæ*, the *semilunar valves*, or other contrivances of nature, the thought frequently occurs, either that this is similar to what some ingenious mechanist has contrived, or what he might have invented by bestowing sufficient consideration upon it. So strong is the conviction of similarity of effect between nature and art, that many of the contrivances in the former do not appear to us, even in degree, absolutely beyond the scope of human ingenuity, if but time and means enough had been granted.

So long, then, as the constitution of our minds compels us to reason from analogy, the proposition that the works of nature proceed from the development of the inherent powers of matter, can no more satisfy us than if the same were proposed as the cause of the works of art.

It has been argued, that we cannot apply analogy to find the cause of the universe, because this is an unique, and we have no other caused universe to compare it with.* But we can compare it with parts of itself, viz. ourselves and our works; and it does not appear why analogies arising

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* See Hume's Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding, Section xi. near the end.

thence should not have as much weight as if we could compare one universe with another. We have a right to reason from what we know; we are so placed as to see causes in some small parts of the universe, and thence, by analogy, to infer something of the nature of the cause of the whole.

Imagine the inhabitant of a distant country, in some degree acquainted with mechanical contrivances, inspecting an European steam-engine or watch. By long study he comes to perceive the object of the machine, and the adaptation of parts so as to effect that object. Knowing his own power of putting together matter with some degree of success, so as to produce certain effects, he concludes, rationally, that the machine before him must have proceeded from a being resembling himself in the possession of such a power. He may be ignorant of the form, colour, habits, and language of the unknown artist, but he reads his *mind* with as much certainty as if he stood before him; for the machine speaks in a language which needs no translation. If neither time, nor space, could hinder the intelligent Japanese from recognizing the kindred mind of the European by means of its works; why should time, space, or any other mode of separation, prevent any thinking man from recognizing the kindred mind of the First Cause by means of its works? Whether the unseen existence be separated from us by land, seas, and years, or by a different mode of being, matters not, if the work speaks clearly. The distance of the pole-star could not prevent the electric recognition; neither can the more impassable chasm between us and an existence shrouded from our senses.

It might be objected that this mode of analogical reasoning would prove too much, and lead us to conclude that the First Cause has material organs like our own, since we infer the existence of these, as well as of mind, from all specimens of human art. But this objection

supposes an abuse of analogy. We certainly do infer that, with respect to pieces of workmanship, apparently of human origin, the originators had, in all probability, hands and feet like our own; because we believe that there are no beings on the earth possessing the requisite mental endowments, except such as have likewise these organs as their means of acting on matter. But we could not infer justly that other beings, having mind, might not have different organs wherewith to operate on matter. A piece of mechanism, known to be brought from some part of the earth, leads us to infer, without much hesitation, that the maker had hands or feet. But if another piece of mechanism were brought to us, known to come from another planet, we should only dare to infer that the maker had some kind of prehensile power, by means of which he had put together the material parts. The intricacy and perfection of the work, if apparently surpassing human art, might lead us to conclude that the unknown maker had means of penetrating into and guiding matter, more subtle and more effective than any human organ or instrument. They might be, in these respects, so different from human organs, that a comparison between the two could only be admitted as figurative. The mind, by means of the human hand alone, affects matter slowly and clumsily; it learns to employ, in some degree, instruments provided by nature, from the wooden staff to the electric fluid and chemical solvent. But other minds might be gifted with the means of grasping more directly the forces of nature, and of employing them with a facility, and to an extent, by us unattainable. They might cleave with the lightning, and communicate by the thunder. Where, from the effects, we should judge that this greater prehensility of the forces of nature had existed, we should conclude that the operating mind had been endowed with means of influencing matter more efficacious than our organs.

In the universe the mental agency appears to have operated upon matter, with a range and a subtilty, which are expressed in the description,—an Almighty pervading soul. The arm reaches beyond the farthest star, yet discriminates the breadth of a hair; it projects the heavy planet, and moulds the minutest particle. It is impossible to imagine that mind, acting through human organs, or any resembling them, could, after ages of essay and improvement, ever approach the operation of that agency either in magnitude or exquisiteness. To form a work, not only perfect in itself, but also containing a provision for producing its like in endless succession, would probably for ever baffle human ingenuity. But this is one of the most common properties of the works of nature. It is so difficult to imagine any kind of *organs*, by which such an universal efficient sway over matter could have been exerted, that we naturally acquire the notion that the first Causing Mind must have operated upon matter direct, without the intervention of any organs, and that every atom must have obeyed its influence with the same promptness as the nerve obeys human volition.

Analogy, then, leads us to infer that the works of nature were caused by some kind of mind, as well as the works of art. But so far from proving that that mind operated by means of organs resembling ours, it rather brings us to the conclusion, that it must have had means of influencing matter very different from ours. The man moves bodies by impulses of his limbs; we can imagine a being gifted with the power of doing so by directing towards the bodies at will the requisite degree of attraction or repulsion. More subtle agencies than these may be supposed to be subject to volition; and thus may we refine from man's clumsy mode of operation, to a being in whom Mind acts directly and universally upon Matter.

Even in the case of man, we know but little of the *mode* in which his mind acts upon matter. Our total

ignorance of the mode of action of a divine mind does, therefore, by no means disprove such action. Neither is it a disproof of this, that we are ignorant of the mode of the divine existence, whether it pervades the whole material creation, as a soul the body; or sits an independent invisible potentate amidst its creatures. Ask also whether the Divine Mind threw off the creation at once, perfect, and holding its own resources of progression and development, or whether his energy is perpetually required to uphold his work; and the doubtfulness of the answer will perhaps be in proportion to the time of reflection. But where is the truth, the clearest ever acknowledged by men, which busy thought has not soon surrounded and clogged with embarrassing or unanswerable questions? Man knows nothing but what lies close to something unknown or unknowable.

How can God exist? Answer first, how does man exist? Man is not the hand, nor the foot, nor the stomach, nor the brain, nor even the eye; but in the combined action of all his material parts do we recognize the man. And what is this action? Continue to question thus; and the wisest deed, and the most expressive glance, are resolved into the motion of sundry clusters of oxygen, carbon, and the like, in different directions. Man himself shrinks into an abstraction, which soon becomes so hazy, that if, his existence depended on our power to define him, we should begin to doubt if we really had any fellow-creatures.*

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* Sic mentem hominis, quamvis eam non videas, ut Deum non vides, tamen ut Deum agnoscis ex operibus ejus; sic ex memoria rerum et inventione, et celeritate motus, omnique pulchritudine virtutis vim divinam mentis agnoscito.... Illud modo videto, ut Deum noris, etsi ejus ignores et locum et faciem, sic animum tibi tuum notum esse oportere, etiam si ignores et locumet formam.—*Cicero, Tusc. Disp. lib.* 1. *cap.* 29.

Nevertheless, man's existence is sufficiently palpable, although we cannot explain it. O that the First Cause had made his at least equally so; that the awful Potentate had once unveiled himself to our eyes, or that his voice had once broken through the obstinate silence of nature! Then we must have believed, without, or in spite of, any reasoning. Why? because he would have appealed to our senses. Reflect;—and thou wilt find that he *has* appealed to some of man's highest senses, his moral and intellectual powers. He compliments man, by addressing the highest part of his nature.

In what manner do we know a man best and most thoroughly?—By his appearance? No.—By his conversation? Better; but not so well as by experiencing his conduct in a long series of deeds. These speak in the surest manner; they speak to our moral and intellectual senses: and thus may we know thoroughly him whom we have never seen or heard.

And thus does God choose to speak to man—by *deeds*. A more subtle mode of communication than the brightest vision or the softest whisper; but, to the thinking, more refined, more pleasing, more intelligible. Let children look for cherubim, and rhapsodists for voices from heaven; mature reason and feeling appreciate more highly Works of beauty and beneficence. In what language should God have spoken to men from heaven, or written his message in the sky? In Hebrew! in Greek! in Sanscrit! He has chosen his own language; and has he not well chosen? Does not the rose or the hyacinth speak as plainly as could any noun or participle, the verdure running before the breeze exceed the sense of any aorist, and the star rising above the wood convey more than any Hebrew point? God can do without hiphil and hophal, without pluperfect and paulo-post future: he is perfect in the language of signs, and the

whole material creation is his symbol-picture to all ranks of intelligence.

Yet God's magnificent language fails at times to convince us; and restless scepticism suggests that, if the First Cause were really intelligent and beneficent mind, he might have made his existence more irresistibly clear to us. By what means? Rack thy utmost ingenuity, scepticism, and say what God should have done to convince thee. He might have planted an angel showman on each work of nature, to inform every visitant, in clear tones, that it was produced by intelligence and benevolence; he might have fixed Uriel for ever in the sun, to trumpet forth to the planets that the fountain of their light and heat was derived from a first cause provident and good:—would any deeper conviction really spring from the presence of these officious informants? and would not Uriel himself soon come to be considered the most superfluous piece of work in the system? Or, more solemn than this, the Divine Mind itself might make itself perceptible to man's senses by some periodical Shechinah, and above the sapphire pavement of the firmament, or in the amber-coloured vision surmounting the wheels, or from the pillar of fire, or in the still whisper, startle man at times with the presence of his God. But what would avail the visitation of the awful Presence? If it proclaimed each time that itself was the first cause of nature, intelligent and benevolent, man would turn to nature for verification, and believe just so much of the proclamation as he found there confirmed. When accustomed to the visitation, he would gain little or no more certainty above that resulting from his inquiries into nature. He would give greater credence to the language to which God has, in fact, confined himself,—*the language of deeds.*

There is a composure and dignity in God's manner of proceeding which impresses more forcibly than could be

done by the ostentation of actual speech and appearance. He is seen and heard in his works. The universe is the splendid but quiet language in which he utters his stupendous "I am." What is it all for? occurs to every one who looks on nature and thinks. The First Intelligence intended to make himself known to all emanating intelligences, and this is the way in which he has chosen to effect it; it being as easy to him to throw off all this array of worlds and mechanism, as to set the types of two short words.

Nature thus seen as the language of mind, assumes a brighter hue and more vigorous life, than when viewed under a mere material aspect. What is this lovely prospect of variegated fields and sunny sky, if nothing in it can feel like thyself, nor aught in it indicate the existence of perception kindred to thy own? Acknowledge that it pleases the eye, invigorates health, and supplies forms to the fancy;—this is much: but is not the profuse beauty of nature worthy to do more, and to speak to all that is highest in man, his admiration, love, and reverence? It does so, as soon as we see in Nature the offspring and index of Mind. What is all this prodigious array of shining globes, if they tell of nothing more than themselves, insentient moving masses, fit to employ arithmetic and geometry with counting their numbers and laws? Even when the deepest and most magnificent apartments of nature are thrown open, the soul remains solitary and chill at the sight of them alone, and asks if all this costly pile be intended to gratify only a small part of the man, leaving his more god-like faculties uninvited strangers? Does Nature indeed, in her softest recesses or most gorgeous displays, aim merely at inciting man to see, hear, smell, and calculate? Yet what more than this can he do amidst mere matter, however large or small, or swift or slow? But admit Mind as the cause of all, the pervader and beholder of all, and the chasm is filled; man

also admires, loves, and venerates. A vivifying spirit is infused into creation, and gives the response which his soul demanded. The desert is not solitude, nor the sea dreariness. The thoughts of the unseen mental causes, which become associated with all the objects of nature, leave no want of Dryads in the woods, Naiads in the brooks, or Genii in the air. The Sun proclaims more vitality than light and heat, as he mounts above the hill; the Moon's crescent bends before the pervading Spirit; Arcturus follows his wain round the pole, and Andromeda rises from the wave, in unwearied obedience to the Invisible; the Pleiads shake adoration as well as radiance from their glittering cluster; and all the mystic forms of the sky seem to look on the earth with awful silent life,—for each and all are the work, the voice, and the token, of Living Mind.

But, the laws of nature! inflexible, insensible, but all moving; do they not reduce the universe to a regular perpetually going piece of clockwork, and exclude mind by filling all with lifeless iron mechanism? All this beauty and harmony is merely the consequence of each atom's obedience to its own laws. What causes the course of the planet? Not God, but attraction of gravitation. What causes attraction? Some preceding necessary property of matter, which science will by and by discover. For each of the enormous collection of effects constituting the whole which we see, we find, on examination, a material cause, with another material cause behind it; and when we have discovered causes which appear invariably to precede certain effects, we call the sequence a law of nature. Admit the laws of nature to be, and what necessity for God? Explore the chains of causes and effects;—as far as we can trace them, no mind appears; the links join on perfectly, although only material, in the portion before us; and so may they also in the length stretching out of our reach. The more

closely we examine any part of creation, the more do Cause and Effect rise up, and claim as their work what our glowing imagination had superficially attributed to the operation of Mind. Trace causes and effects then, O philosopher; examine minutely each part of what you see, and say if the phantasm of a Causing Mind will not be gradually pushed out of the universe.

Yes, by resting in a minute examination of parts only, and overlooking the result of each whole. Thus might mind be excluded from man and his works. What work of art is there, in which the aim and intent, i. e. the mind, of the artist may not be missed, if we confine our attention to groping amongst the details? The examination of these may let us into the secret of the *means* which he has employed to bring about his purpose; but to seize this purpose, and read his meaning, we must look at the whole working and effect. Is it a sufficient explanation of the steam-engine to give, in correct detail, the connexion and dependence of each of its parts; to shew how the working of one part must necessarily follow the action of the preceding; to state that the water must be raised from the well, because the upward motion of the bucket is the necessary sequence of the motion of the wheel, as this is caused inevitably by the motion of the beam, which follows of necessity the stroke of the piston, which could not but result from the pressure of the steam, which must proceed from the action of heat upon the water in the boiler? And here might an indefinite further chain of mechanical causes be supposed; but this tracing of the chain of sequences leaves all the while unexplained the cause of the whole work. Each successive link suggests more forcibly the idea of something more, which arranged the train of material causes and effects, so as to end in an apparently contemplated result.

But the mind of man, to which our pipes and boiler lead us, is itself a continuation of the mechanism, although

of more subtle construction and properties! Grant this; the mind *is* mechanism, inasmuch as it is moved by springs, of a peculiar make,—reason, desires, and affections. Let us but trace nature back to this kind of *mental mechanism*, and it is enough; man has found a cause resembling himself. Call mind mechanism; define it as subject to its own fixed laws, or otherwise; it is sufficient to trace nature back to Mind.

The explanation of the sequence of action in the successive parts would seem an absurdity, if offered as the sufficient cause of any piece of human art. Why, then, should it satisfy us any more in the works of nature? The chains of cause and effect in these are longer, and reach back farther than we can follow; in few of them, if any, can we arrive at the link where the causing mind itself operated upon matter.* Nevertheless, here matter seems no more gifted with the power of arranging itself, than in brass wheels and iron bars; nor of contemplating, any more than they, the beautiful and useful result in which this long chain of adaptation ends. Do the sun, the rain, the soil, the roots, and the sap-vessels, take counsel together to form the flower? If they do not, something else must; or the flower appears before us as a fortunate accident. What a vast assemblage of fortunate accidents make up the universe! For here, millions of chains of causes and effects end in results beneficial to sentient beings; and all these separate results harmonize together in a beautiful whole.†

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* The introduction of new species into the universe, not explicable by a transmutation of preceding ones, as in the case of the recent origin of man, seems an instance of this kind. And the same might be said, perhaps, of the introduction of the first sentient creature upon this planet.

† After making the largest allowance for the results apparently evil or useless, such as pestilential vapours, burning deserts, noxious insects and reptiles, and the like, there remains a large

The more science advances, the more does it appear that all parts of nature are connected. Not only is the air about us adapted to the organs of plants and animals; but the light from the farthest star finds itself at home on the retina of man. And the influence of bodies in remotest space is reverberated through the firmament as far as our system by means of attraction. Probably, no part of the universe could be annihilated without detriment to the rest. On the supposition of separate independent chains of causes and effects, uncaused by mind, the Universal Harmony is a startling conclusion. We should not be prepared to expect this. Some few of the results might have formed harmonious combinations; but, in general, we should have expected to find the universe a miscellaneous assemblage of effects, having no apparent harmony, adaptation, or subserviency,—a heap of confused incongruous productions, which no art could piece together into a serviceable whole. The harmonious combination of the results of the chains is, indeed, a striking feature, which forces itself on the attention, and demands imperatively some solution. It could not be an accident; for the chains are numerous,

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majority of beneficial productions in nature. The catalogue of apparent exceptions is continually decreasing as science advances, and contributes its items to the opposite list. For instance, insects and reptiles have enjoyed their own lives, and contributed to maintain the earth in the state fit for animal life. When man comes into contact with them, the noxious qualities of some species indicate that man and they are not intended to dwell together; and the very courses which are for his interest in other respects, cleanliness, improvement of soils, and draining of marshes, tend to extirpate them. The large majority of acknowledged instances of good, and the probability that the remaining ones of apparent evil will come, in time, to be classed with them, allow of the general unqualified assertion, that the arrangements of nature end in beneficial results.

and the harmony complete; there must have been *something* influencing them all; some bond of union which has given a common character and tendency to all the chains, and established a relationship between the most distant and dissimilar parts of nature. What is this Something, which has tied all nature together in a mysterious and beautiful connexion? What answer can satisfy us as to this deep-working and all-pervading somewhat?—Cause and effect?—an inherent property of Order in matter?—a Law of nature? None of these; but a causing Mind.

The harmony of the creation, the adaptation of innumerable parts into a whole which our minds recognize as skilfully arranged, beautiful, and useful, impresses us irresistibly with the agency of mind. And this impression cannot be weakened by finding that the forming Mind has operated through a greater or less train of secondary causes. Grant that the planet has resulted from a fragment thrown off from the sun, and that the sun itself has resulted from the condensation of a whirling nebulous mass, and that this nebula proceeded from something else unknown, but all according to the fixed laws of matter; still the Solar System, which is now before us, is not less admirable, nor less obviously suitable to the wants of plants and animals, for appearing thus as the result of a long train of secondary causes, than if it had sprung forth at once in maturity from the Creator's fiat. Trace back also the vegetable and animal forms which cover the earth, through a long series of developments, to the period when its surface seemed only to present a rude collection of unmoulded materials; the riches of the Seasons, which we now experience, are not the less ravishing to men's minds and senses. Nature presents us with a magnificent and harmonious pattern. Who will say, that it is less obviously the result of a skilful mind, because the threads which compose it appear to have proceeded from the original design, through much ma-

chinery of cause and effect? The pattern makes its own declaration of a designing mind, whatever be the means by which it was woven; whether, at once, from the fingers of the artist, or through a long series of intermediate machinery. Secondary causes exhibit the machinery which God has made use of; the laws of nature shew his system of working with matter; they are the loom of his own construction, through which he throws off from eternity a succession of splendid works.*

Matter, in the same circumstances, appears always to act, or to be acted upon, in the same manner; and these fixed rules of action or passion we call laws of nature. It is true that, supposing the different materials which compose the Creation to have been in existence, and these laws to have been in force, we can imagine that the present scene of things might have resulted, of necessity, from the progressive action and re-action of the materials. Place on the stage of infinite space, heat with its expansive power, water with its pressure in proportion to depth, the array of chemical elements with their respective degrees of affinity, and all matter with attraction in inverse proportion to the square of the distance,—and we can imagine that these actors must necessarily have played together a drama, of which the different acts appear successively throughout eternity in the varying phases of the universe. But what kind of a scene results

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* In Being's floods, in Action's storm,
I walk and work, above, beneath,
Work and weave in endless motion!
Birth and Death,
An infinite Ocean;
A seizing and giving
The fire of the Living:
'Tis thus at the roaring loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the Garment thou see'st Him by.
Song of the Earth-Spirit, in Faust.

from the actions of all these various performers? One of confusion, an assemblage of incoherent results, independent of each other, or warring with and destroying each other? No; but one in which our minds recognize, the more we study it, an harmonious and mutually supporting action. Then heat, water, and their brethren, have acted together with a concord which it would be impossible to inspire, in the same degree, into creatures even gifted with reason. Had they all some glimmering perception of the orderly and the beautiful, which made each one of the company fall readily into that mode of action, which, in combination with the rest, should tend best to such a result? The harmonious action of the drama proves it to be a regular and well-planned piece, and not a wild unconcerted pantomime; if, then, we find nothing in the actors themselves indicating that they had powers sufficient to contrive it, we must conclude that the piece had an author of greater powers than they, who does not, himself, appear on the scenes, but under whose direction each of these subordinate agents is playing the part which he has written for it. And this Great Unseen, who has written the drama of the Universe, to be played by the different forms of matter, in the parts called laws of nature, for the instruction of all ranks of intelligence, —is Mind.

But suppose, that what appear to us different laws of nature are only modifications of one and the same principle; and that the researches of science will tend continually to simplify all into the action of One great law of nature, seen by us under various aspects. This one law then was such, that, being applied to matter, it had the power of producing an harmonious and progressive creation. What could be this law, having, in itself, the germ of endless variety, order, and beauty? How fortunate that matter happened to be subject to this, rather than some other, which should have produced quite different

effects! A law, principle, or somewhat, which is capable of producing in such abundance things which appear so much like the results of skill and intelligence! It rises itself into a Deity; but then the words law or principle imply incogitation, and mere mode of action or being in something else. If we will not change the ideas which the sight of creation urges us to apply to this somewhat, we must change the words. Law or Principle is insufficient. And why embarrass ourselves in inventing new names and definitions for this hidden but powerful somewhat, which has caused creation, when we are so fortunate as to have close to us many specimens of something known to produce, on a smaller scale, similar effects? And that is Mind, creating Mind.

Imagine ourselves excluded for a moment from the view of surrounding creation; what would be our reflections on considering the existence of mind in ourselves? —that the human mind was probably the only instance of this kind of existence! Impossible. Man feels his own mind to be but a small portion of a power which awakens matter into the highest kind of life: he delights to feel this power in himself, and to exercise it; but the attempt convinces him that he has it in only a small degree. The dominion over matter, which he finds his mental faculties bestow, gives him the desire to enlarge these faculties. Since, with his petty actual endowment, he is able to mould a few materials within his immediate reach, what dominion might he not attain, if he could indefinitely enlarge this power? And may there not be beings gifted with a higher degree of that which he feels himself to possess on so limited a scale? Can man be the moral and intellectual unique in creation? How surprising, that, in a world so redundant with *matter*, this higher creation, *mind*, should be so scarce, that the narrow little portion of it found in man should be the highest degree of it existing! But issue forth into the open view of nature;

look from the earth to the firmament, at the stupendous mechanism of Nature, and hear her confirm thy hesitating thoughts. See here the infinite of that which in thee is finite:—mind is not in thee alone; above, below, and around, see the effects of it when free, unbounded, immense: here it is in its most extended operation, in universal sway over matter. Rightly didst thou conjecture that thy small portion was not the only nor the highest degree of mind: as thy body is less than a point, when compared to the whole material creation, so, in proportion, is thy mind to the Spirit of the universe.

Whence came the human mind?—Not out of granite, nor ferns, nor ichthyosauri. History and observation, and even imagination, utterly fail to evolve man out of the polypus, whether through the dog, the elephant, or the ape.* Yet man and his mind do exist, and no effect is without a cause. Had Adam ancestors without a beginning? Geology answers, No. Was there ever a time, hidden in bygone ages, when the human mind *began* to be? Then something caused it, and this cause must have contained something corresponding to the powers in the effect. For mind could not spring out of imperceptive matter; nor could imperceptive matter, of its own accord, ever begin to think. At whatever date we find the commencement of the human mind, some kind of mind must have existed before it; this in its turn, if not itself eternal, must have been preceded also by mind; and thus must mind, in some form, have been eternal. Let thinking beings trace back their pedigree, and they will find it always run in the family of thought. The ancestral research confirms the discovery which just now thou hast made in nature; there, were the indications of a mind in some manner *resembling* and *related to* thine own. Stretch thy sight over the line of thy progenitors

* See Lyell's Geology, book iii. chap. i., ii.

into past eternity, and there thou seest in dim remoteness a Father of Spirits.

But, again, where and what is this causing Mind, which reason forces us to acknowledge, but which glides away when we seek to personify it? The angelic form riding on the whirlwind,—the Spirit moving on the face of the waters,—the invisible Potentate sitting amidst the stars,—are merely more refined creations of poor human fancy, endeavouring to bring the ideal before our senses. The Causing Mind will not be embodied, nor be known to us otherwise than as an abstraction. It communicates itself to us by its works; but the works are not itself. Is it therefore less a reality? Consider if we have no other and familiar instance of an abstraction which we count as a reality; something which cannot be seen, heard, smelt, tasted, nor felt, but which we yet recognize as an indubitable existence? Yes, the mind of man; we know it only by seeing the movement of various parcels of matter, and receiving certain vibrations of the air. These movements and these vibrations are not the mind; yet we are so well satisfied with the perception which from them we obtain of another's mind, that we regard it as a real existence, and address to it our thoughts, affections, and sympathies. See the movements and vibrations pervading all nature, and thence be equally satisfied of the existence of the Divine Mind.

What if we were obliged to admit, O Materialist, that the human mind is only a mode of action of certain parcels of matter called the brain! The human mind is not a whit the less, on that account, a delightful reality, nor all the sensations called mental,—thought, feeling, and imagination, springing within ourselves, or awakened by the approach of similar natures, the less real. Grant, then, for a moment, that the Divine Mind is some principle indissolubly connected with, and not manifesting itself apart from, matter. It is no less a reality, and, like our

own, no less the object of thought and feeling, than if it were an immaterial essence sitting alone in an universe which contained no material atom.

God is not seen, and therefore is not! Grovelling logic, contradicted by every thought of man which rises but a few degrees above his mere sensual nature! Have we not faculties wherewith to contemplate the unseen; by which this becomes to us, in numberless forms, a reality the highest and dearest? Honour is not the note which discharges a debt, nor fame the applauding crowd, nor love the outstretched hand and welcoming smile. But out of the most refined visible manifestation arises something more refined and subtile still, the abstraction which our senses cannot grasp, but which the mind welcomes as the reality towards which it was unconsciously working its ascent from the things of mere sense. The five senses are but a small part of man; mere channels to supply the material out of which his incomprehensible mechanism elaborates abstractions to feed his higher nature. Hardly equal to the brutes, if he could merely see, hear, smell, taste, and touch,—he becomes a god when he is able to understand, admire, love, and venerate. Poor is the noblest material form, if it reach only to the senses; but out of those material particles, in themselves so dull and vile, arises the ideal essence of the sublime, the love-worthy, or the beautiful, which touches the mind into higher life, and which is the only reality it cares to bear away. The human form itself, in highest perfection, soon ceases to interest, unless it give rise to those abstractions which form our most subtile delight; but where these are, we can love and admire, although the unseen form be to us the same as not existing. Who does not make to himself a reality, and an object of affections, of the unseen agent of generous and benevolent deeds, even though the few cubic feet of substance which compose his form, and any visible

manifestation connected with them, should never reach him? So accustomed are we to treat abstractions as realities, that it seldom occurs to us that the existence of the historical personage is the more doubtful, because the historian has not supplied us with the means of defining his visible form. To which of the two is Cæsar more a reality; to the Roman slave who saw a human form, resembling many others, in the triumphal car and toga; or to the reader of to-day, who has followed the accomplished, vain, and ambitious conqueror from the plains of Gaul to the foot of Pompey's statue? Nor need we appeal so far as to history. Are not those unseen ones, whose thoughts alone, reaching to us, stir up in us a high and intense life;—are they not to us realities a thousand times more interesting than the mere visible forms, the acquaintances of eye and ear, which cross our every-day path?

What, though our minds be not always tuned to this high pitch, and often sink down from abstractions to the basis of things material and sensible out of which they arise,—they cannot remain there long, but feel gradually borne up by their nature into higher action. Not alone does the poet or the philosopher seek for the ideal as a part of his mind's needful aliment. The peasant and the artisan also seek more than the things which they see and handle; and catch gladly at those words and sounds which give them the glimmering of another kind of life, the life of the fantasy. Hence has superstition been able to maintain her sway so stoutly in defiance of common sense, by allying herself with powers to which man by nature owned a grateful and willing allegiance. The religious fable or absurdity has been suffered to pass unquestioned, for the sake of the grace, faith, or spiritual influence by which it has invited men to the action of their higher faculties. And possibly this action, even when somewhat diseased and in excess, was less injurious

than the total death of man's ideal and spiritual nature. But cannot reason also form an alliance with this; or must we acknowledge that in proportion to the dominion of reason, man must restrict himself to the exercise of his senses, and admit as fact and reality their acquaintances alone? This cannot be; Nature bids us refuse to lower our standard to the capabilities of those whom she intended to be mere door-keepers to the mind, and urges us to receive all that higher world of ideas which follow the impressions of sense, welcoming them as the congenial companions and best friends of reason.

Are abstractions, then, delightful realities of the mind in its highest exercise? Then God speaks to us by means of our highest faculties; and who would wish that he had spoken otherwise? The being who has senses alone goes into nature, and finds only herbs, waters, sky, and planets. The being who has also intellect, imagination, and affections, cannot see these without finding also the Mind of the Universe.

Doubly pleasing does nature become when reason has once satisfied us that she is authorized to respond to the heart. The mind of the First Cause speaks to us through his works. Matter, inorganic and organic! How poor and mean nature seemed when this was all we could see in her! but now we begin to penetrate farther, and find that these forms were but the outward expression of something higher than themselves. The loneliness felt amidst heaps of insentiency, however splendidly arrayed, disappears as soon as we begin to distinguish the voice of Intelligence which speaks through them. Mind caused them, exists amidst them, and speaks by them. Each object becomes more than a spectacle; it is the medium of communication from a mind. The wild flower which we scarcely notice, the satellite which we disregard amidst the brilliancy of the sky, would tell us volumes, if they were all in the external world to which we had

access. But from the stores of the Parent Cause these would be but penurious epistles; and he conveys his meaning in a richly variegated earth, and a boundless firmament.

With this Scripture we may be well content; and knowing that here it is appointed for us to learn all we can and ought to know of God, his nature, and his will, cease to regret the loss of that strange existence which made a capricious covenant with Abraham, or of the voice which delivered to Moses moral precepts, intermingled with directions concerning the fringe of the tabernacle and knobs of the candlestick, or of the Being who declared himself at one time long suffering and gracious, and at another denounced heavy punishments for sparing the wives and children of the vanquished. A more refined conception followed these, in so far as man's expanding mind began to catch the tone and spirit of nature. But nature is more durable than man's words, whether conveyed through other men's memories, or by paper and parchment. We can appeal to her direct, without help from any translator or expounder, besides our own head and heart. The God whom she proclaims is a certainty in a far higher degree than any God revealed to us through distant records, for the pledges of his existence are the things around us and within us every moment, free from all suspicion of forgery, delusion, or imposture.

And what does this elder, but ever fresh, Scripture teach concerning the character of the Creating Mind? Is there aught in it, besides intelligence, which betokens kindred to our own? How does the intelligence employ itself, and towards what objects does it tend? That of man is combined with other faculties and tastes, and exercises itself in the directions to which these point. He loves to explore the properties of figure and number, and to make these properties subservient to his purposes

in combining material things; he delights in sweet sounds and graceful forms, and deems it no small part of reason's task to promote the gratification of the eye and the ear; and above all, his intelligence finds a necessity of being in action of some kind amongst the material things which surround it. Does the Divine Intelligence resemble the human in any of these respects? or does it operate towards objects altogether incomprehensible to man, foreign to his tastes, bearing no parallel to his aims, and no relation to his faculties? A range through nature soon leads to the pleasing discovery, that the Creative Intelligence is combined also with something corresponding to the senses, tastes, and imagination of man. He finds not a strange and repulsive creation which jars harshly upon his own nature, but one which accords wonderfully with it. To whatever side he turns, nature presents something to harmonize with his faculties, and he feels himself in a father-land. Earth and skies reveal a conceptive Painter, a skilful Musician, a deep Geometrician, a sure Architect, and, whether in these or other forms, an ever-active mind.*

In some things mankind cannot approach the perfection displayed in nature. The problem of the three bo-

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* Man appears to have certain determinate faculties, which may be modified by the action of external things, but can neither be entirely created nor destroyed by it. Therefore the pleasure which he takes in nature indicates an agreement or harmony between his appetencies and external things, and not the necessary derivation of the former from the latter. Persons who have been excluded from their birth from natural scenery, experience a lively pleasure when at last introduced to it. It is quite conceivable that man and external nature should have been constituted so that the latter might produce an unpleasing effect upon the whole or the greater part of the faculties of the former; therefore the agreement or harmony alluded to, unless we call it a coincidence, demands some explanation.

dies occupied the ablest mathematicians of Europe for many years, and Clairaut was only able to solve it approximately. Yet how much more complicated must be the problems to be solved in order to balance millions of systems!* With respect to sounds and colours also, the artificial seldom equal the natural in sweetness or vividness. But in some cases, as in the collocation of the parts of a landscape, or in the combination of sounds into a concert, art seems able to improve upon nature. Remembering that man himself is a part of the latter, we should hence conclude, that, in some cases, God exhibits a higher degree of skill out of us, and in other cases through us.

Whether it be true or not, that in some particular cases man is able to do better than what he finds already done in nature, the general fact, that the material creation is such as to delight his faculties, remains indisputable; and, looking at the whole, few would admit that any human mind could ever produce such a magnificent and beautiful conception. There is a boldness or freedom of style in the Divine works which strikes the imagination, independently of size and extent. God is not a formalist who draws only in parallel lines, perfect curves, and similar figures. This he can do where it conduces to utility, as in the cellular tissues, the spider's

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* The hypothesis, that the matter scattered throughout the heavens must, during eternity, have time to fall into all possible combinations, and therefore must at last hit upon one of the few which would balance the universe, although not absolutely impossible, is too violent to be admitted, without strong support from facts. No record, either through intelligent beings or material things, has reached us of that enormous period when Nature was making her unsuccessful experiments. The earliest geological epochs appear to be parts of a regular plan of progression. The hypothesis referred to is totally unsupported by that which forms the basis of the argument for an Intelligent Cause, viz. fact and analogy.

web, the cells of bees, and in the members of the body which exist in pairs. He can be most minute in regularity, for the earth never varies a minute in the time of its rotation, nor does the radius vector of any planet describe an inch more or less of area in equal times. Yet, where no purpose of utility appears to be promoted by regularity, he prefers the variety of seeming chance. The stars are scattered throughout the firmament, so that no area in space can be matched with its duplicate; yet who does not confess that the confusion which allows the imagination to form the wild group of Orion, the Centaur, the Lion, and all their fellow mystic forms, emblems of scientific facts, or representations of the fables which sprung from the fancy of the young human race,—that this wild collocation exceeds in sublime effect the most regular corniced temple-ceiling into which the Divine Artificer might have marked out the sky? And who that sees from some eminence the beautiful confusion of rocks, sea, meadows, and woods, assembled in no definable proportion or plan, would wish that the Designer had preferred to arrange the components of his landscapes with the regularity of tesselated pavements?

But this is mere trifling, compared with the deeper query which the heart longs to put to nature. Is the universal mind Ormusd or Ahriman? For, with all that she has yet said, he might still be an all-powerful refined tormentor. The wise and skilful we may admire; but the benevolent we confide in and love. There has been, and is, much that seems evil; when she is clearly understood, what will be the final translation of her sentence—that good, evil, a compromise, or a neutrality, is the rule of the universe? If the Persian had been told so much of the future, as that the progress of knowledge would prove it impossible for two principles to reign jointly in the universe, since each successive investigation of nature shewed more and more

the unity of design, from the lowest gulf of the Caspian to the star which hardly twinkles beside Aldebaran, how would he desire to ask the further question, which of the two principles would advancing knowledge recognize as the predominant, and whether Ormusd or Ahriman would be dissipated by science into a non-entity! He might, perhaps, have anticipated the answer, but with some trembling. Three thousand years enable us to anticipate the final decision of nature with tranquillity. The study of matter and mind has proved, that so much of what was called evil is the necessary means of preventing the destruction of our physical frame, or of promoting the life of our moral nature, that we look securely for the further results of science as to what remains of evil unexplained.* Since the more intently men have looked at nature, the more of evil has appeared to change into goodness of a different hue, we must anticipate that a perfect revelation will shew the seeming blots which remain, to be in reality harmonizing features in a scene of beneficence. Thus relieved with respect to these darker passages of nature, we are at liberty to rejoice in her general clear and easy language of joyous suns, smiling earth, bodies replete with agreeable sensations, and sights and tones innumerable which breathe peace or delight. Thus in abundant eloquence she declares that neither malevolence nor indifference has presided over the creation of all things, but that benevolence was, in some unaccountable way, the predominant attribute of the Causing Mind.

Might it not have been otherwise? Is there any latent self-contradiction in the supposition that the order of things might have been such as to give as much pain, or as little pleasure, as was consistent with continuation?—that life and reproduction should have been enforced by pain,

* See Combe's Constitution of Man.

rather than persuaded by pleasure; and that a miserable world, or a dull world, should have been compelled to drag on for millions of ages, in order to supply a necessary link of the great whole? It is conceivable: why was it not so? We cannot tell; but we can rejoice in the actual reality. A common-place phrase is it,—the beneficent order of things. But to Adam, just created, it would have been a thrilling discovery. Pause sometimes, all sons of Adam, and rejoice to think upon the good luck, or fortunate necessity, or whatever other name seems best to suit the incomprehensible fate which made goodness predominant in the universe which holds you.

The creating Intelligence, which all nature had revealed, is also beneficent. Delightful discovery! Then can man repose securely and trust implicitly. For the rest, his weak understanding need not perplex itself more than for diversion and exercise. When, strong and active, his mind is restless for employment, let it seek farther into the nature of God and the destiny of man; but when, weary and troubled, it needs repose, let it sink contented upon faith—the clear and easy faith which a beautiful universe has revealed, a benevolent God. What is there further which will not readily grow out of this? From this one article, reason will easily deduce as many as the varying circumstances of each individual may require, and more than thirty-nine of good comfort will be found, confirmed by nature to be of sound orthodoxy.

Benevolence is one of the characteristics which most please us in the human mind. By examining the works of nature, it appears to have been a principle inherent in the First Cause. May we not, then, hope that some of the other sentiments of the human mind have in the First Cause something responding to them? Whether the sentiment be a primitive faculty of the mind, or whether it grows out of its constitution acted upon by other things, it must have had in the original Source of

mind a cause answering to it. If mind could have proceeded from nothing but mind, then the qualities of mind must have proceeded from a cause having some kindred or resembling qualities. Benevolence could not have been made a component of human nature by a cause essentially malevolent. Then also justice, sense of duty, honour, affection, have something responding to them in the cause of man's mind.*

Thus do our mental powers, ranging through nature, discover an existence which rises in sublimity and interest the more they look upon it. By steady contemplation the wondrous abstraction assumes form. The great idea is filled up; whilst the reality of external nature perpetually reminds us that we behold, not our own reflection, but an independent existence.† One by one, qualities throng upon it, until it becomes an entity readily appreciable by thought. It becomes a personality so real, that imagination is almost tempted to add more. The Creative Intelligence, the mighty Geometrician, and conceptive Artist, is also Benevolent; and if so much as all this, he can surely understand and appreciate whatever else enters into the composition of humanity. Then may virtue, endeavouring to imitate him, hope that there is in the universe a

* It might be objected, that this kind of argument would also prove that there are counterparts of man's bad qualities in the Divine Mind. But modern philosophy tends to prove, that the mind has no original bad qualities. Vices are the results of qualities in themselves good, and in harmony with nature, but misdirected, or in excess, owing to defective knowledge. It seems, indeed, not at all improbable, that all primitive faculties in the human mind have some counterpart in the First Cause, although the manifestation of them should be different, owing to its different mode of existence.

† Dante relates, in the Paradise, that the Deity appeared to him under the figure of three circles, forming an iris, whose lively colours generated each other; but that, looking steadily upon the dazzling light, he saw only his own figure.

secret response of approbation, more sure and discerning than that of men; then may humble unseen worth, persevering from a sense of duty in painful struggles, which the ordination of progress has rendered inevitable to many children of earth, retire frequently to seek refreshment from sympathies in nature, compassion, exhortation, and encouragement, expressed in tones which the ear is now attuned to perceive; and if sometimes, stimulated into more keen perception by sorrow, the soul realizes the awful consoling Presence so nearly, that it more than meditates,—can reason condemn?

Honoured be the spirits which have anticipated such religion of nature, and depicted the Cause of the universe in this attractive form. The lower feelings found in the godhead a mere Jupiter Tonans, a vindictive and jealous tyrant of heaven, the partial protector of a family or chosen nation. But more enlarged thought and higher feeling described him as the King and Father of men, Jupiter greatest and best. Especially honoured be he who loved to contemplate, and to address, the unseen Mind as the Father in heaven, hearing and having compassion on all men; and who taught men to avail themselves of this refuge for sorrow. Whatever else he were, he was one of those who have helped to raise and refine, as well as to strengthen, human nature. Philosophy sitting calmly in the schools, or walking at ease in the groves, could not do all that men require; the despised Galilean, with his religion of sorrow, gave strength where philosophy left them weak, and completed the armour of the mind. It was reserved for a persecuted man of a persecuted nation to open the divine depths of sorrow, and to direct men towards the hidden riches of their nature in abysses where, at the first entrance, all appeared barren gloom.

The various systems of religion, or schools of philosophy, which have pre-eminently attracted men's attention, have all contributed something to a complete moral

creed. Each has brought into view some great principle which, although not unknown, had never before been placed in so striking a light. Jesus Christ has added to philosophy the principle of regarding the Supreme Mind as an object of the affections. In suffering and adversity chiefly, this principle comes to be felt as a valuable part of philosophy. In these conditions, it may be questioned if any system, without this, can produce perfect tranquillity, free from apathy. Acquiescence in the decrees of fate or necessity is not enough for a being compounded of imaginations and affections, as well as intellect; the principle suits his whole nature, when raised into submission to the will of a beneficent paternal mind. In this, Jesus wants not the attestation of supernatural voices and signs; he has held up to men a doctrine which nature, when earnestly appealed to, fully sanctions.

Does the adorer still sometimes sigh for a contemplation of the Deity, requiring less strain upon his intellectual nature, and exclaim, O that the Invisible would become flesh, and dwell among us, so that we might see his form and hear his voice, full of grace and truth! or that, at least, he would condescend so far to the weakness of beings in whom sense forms a large part, as to send amongst them some emanating intelligence, his likeness and representative, in a human form! Reflect, thou art asking only what he has already done. Man's mind came out of the all-comprehending cause. Some examples of it exhibit, in no low degree, the attributes which are revealed in creation. In the good and the wise of earth, behold many Incarnations of deity. Be thyself one of them. Wherever thou findest the pure, the energetic, and the love-worthy, fall down in thy own mind and adore the god-like. In this accessible form thou wilt frequently find the godhead walking in the garden, joining at the social board, talking with thee face to face. Avail thyself freely of this familiar channel of recognition

and adoration; by love and reverence for the moral, pay to the Source of Good an easy daily praise; nor fear, by worship of the God on earth, to disparage the God in heaven.

The history of six thousand years exhibits continual stretchings of man after the invisible; and according to the state of mind and manners, these have manifested themselves in superstition, fanaticism, religion, or philosophy. Away with the cant that the idea of a God is only the work of priestcraft; the priests might have availed themselves of what was already in the mind of man, but no priests could have artifice enough to plant there, and cause to grow for ages, what was totally uncongenial to it. Men would have risen sooner against each priestly annoyance, but that they felt the power of unseen realities speaking to them in a voice more forcible than that of bulls and ordinances,—the voice of their reason and of their inmost wants, hopes, and affections. And it has been the art of priests to appear as the allies and visible representatives of these potent influences, and to pretend to minister to those wants of men, which by slow degrees they learn to satisfy direct from nature's fountain. Yet do the strange shapes which the religious sentiment has so frequently assumed, all contain a truth which compels lamentation or laughter to end in some kind of reverence. He may be wanting in perceptions, who can refrain from a smile at some of the abrupt passages which the mixture called human nature has often made in religion as well as other things, from the sublime to the ridiculous; and especially at the impotent conclusion, of the highest aspirations of man being reduced to the poor commonplace of subserving the necessity which some appear to be under of imposing, and others of being imposed upon. But he is equally or more wanting in perceptions, who can see only these in the history of religion, nor discern, amidst various absurd disguises invented by human folly,

an identical fair form of truth, of which the reality and character are spoken to by the constitution of man's mind and of nature. The conceptions of Deity in rude ages must necessarily be lower than in periods of mental refinement; yet, in many of them, we may find the alloy to consist of sentiments which, though not the highest, are neither unworthy nor unnatural. The most philosophic religionist may feel at times the necessity of bringing the Universal Mind, as it were, into that comparatively narrow circle wherein the most active feelings generally find their play, and contemplating it in reference to family, friends, or country. By him the appellations the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God who hath led our fathers through the wilderness, will be regarded as happy modes of bringing the Mighty Incorporeal within the compass of a rude nation's affections and comprehension. Nor will he refuse to lend himself to the associations which the history of Israel, their poetry and music, and also that of Christendom, have connected with the name of the God of Judah, and King of Zion. In all the forms not absolutely revolting or ludicrous, in which the domestic or patriotic feelings of tribes and nations have allied themselves with the religious, will the benignant philosopher find matter for sympathy and approval, rather than of derision; he will enter into the associations of time and place which have rendered such forms interesting and powerful, relax his abstract truths into these poetical and familiar representations, and regard the propensity to fall into them as an amiable, rather than absurd, trait in imperfect human nature.

But, although poetical, historical, and antiquarian interest may preserve, in different nations, partial representations of the Deity for a long time after the belief in the Divine sanction of such representations has ceased,—the tendency of advancing knowledge must be gradually

to abandon these imperfect conceptions, and to prefer that infinitely more enlarged one which progressive thought opens. As the name of Israel is to us now, so will Christendom and Christianity be to our descendants of future generations. As to us the God of Abraham, and the God of Israel, appear too limited designations for the Divine Existence, so to them will appear the names of the Father of Christ, and the God of the Christians. All representations of the Deity depending upon the preservation of human records will be felt to be comparatively unsatisfactory and unsubstantial. But Nature will always be a present grand reality, and the Intelligence which presides throughout nature must be an ever-present reality also. The God of Nature, revealed in greater clearness by each step of physical and mental science, is He whom the Jew, the Christian, the Mahometan, and the Hindoo will at last unite to worship. In the plenitude of philosophic charity, which future centuries are to develope, these may all, in turn, join each other in the peculiar ancient worship of each. Where painting, poetry, or music, may have consecrated the old, imperfect, and partial conceptions of each nation, the enlightened religionist of after-times will find no impediment to his free sympathy in the reminiscences of his neighbours. The Hindoo scholar may repeat with pleasure the praises of the God of Israel, preserved in the relics of Hebrew poetry; the Mahometan musician will not be offended at finding the Deity continually represented as the Father of Jesus Christ in the finest devotional compositions of Christendom; whilst the Jewish or Christian poet will treat with equal candour the strains in honour of Brama. The secondary feelings connected with the religious peculiarities of each clime will be treated, on all sides, with that respectful consideration which true philosophy inspires; whilst all will rejoice together in their respective emancipations from the more galling fetters of their sup-

posed Special Revelations, and meet in full and free communion of thought on the common ground of Nature's Revelation. Religion will at last, like Science, become a point of union, instead of a bar of separation, to the minds of different nations. When it is found that the real Bible, or book in which God reveals himself, has been given equally to all, and that he has already taken care to place it in clear print before every nation, there can be no room for the overweening assumption of exclusive possession of divine truth; and that generous zeal for others' spiritual welfare, which, in a great measure, wastes itself in misdirected missionary exertions, will find an aim more rational and more practicable, in international efforts to promote moral, intellectual, and social improvement.

The distinction between God's works and God's word no longer exists. They are the same. His works are his word. No longer need the mind which seeks its Creator be cramped within the limits of a written volume. O thou, whose earliest conceptions of a creative intelligence awakened by the sight of a wonderful world, and, seeking for further expansion, have been directed to the so-called word of God as the proper fountain of this high knowledge, where this sublimest ardour was to be satisfied, and the great idea fully developed,—hast thou never experienced something like disappointment, when, turning wearily over many pages of the boasted revelation, thou hast found but little to respond to thy nascent desires of truth, and timidly, half self-accusing, asked thyself, Can this really be that loudly extolled book of Revelation, which is to instruct men fully concerning God and his ways? Is it indeed so superior to the instruction of nature, that it deserves to be called pre-eminently the Word of God? I find here and there high thoughts and beautiful conceptions, which shew that between the Nile and the

Euphrates, as well as elsewhere, men possessed a nature capable of being moved occasionally to the contemplation of the mighty Cause of heaven and earth; but do these ancient writers really impart knowledge concerning him beyond the reach of all other sages, and speak in strains unequalled by any other muse ?* Alas! they seldom sustain my mind long in that high region which it was seeking; but drag it down into an earthly atmosphere of low trifling thoughts, petty local interests, and individual or national resentments. This, the book to which stupendous Nature itself was only the preface!—which the Creator of sun and skies has thought it worth while to attest by special messages and inspirations! Neither its genealogies, histories, nor poems, satisfy my want. The spirit of adoration seems to be, by long perusal of this volume, excluded from the great temple of the universe, and compressed into the holy ark of Israel, or into an upper chamber at Jerusalem. Can this book really be the highest field of human study and thought? There must be some mistake.

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* Compare Psalms xix. and Isaiah xl. with Young's Night Thoughts, chap. ix.:—

"Where ends this mighty building? Where begin
The suburbs of creation? Where the wall
Whose battlements look o'er into the vale
Of non-existence? Nothing's strange abode!
Say, at what point of space Jehovah dropp'd
His slackened *line*, and laid his *balance* by;
Weighed *worlds*, and measured *infinite*, no more!
Where rears his *terminating pillar* high
Its extra-mundane head? and says to gods,
In characters illustrious as the sun,
'I stand, the plan's proud period; I pronounce
The work accomplished; the creation closed:
Shout, all ye gods! nor shout, ye gods, alone;
Of all that lives, or, if devoid of life,
That rests, or rolls, ye heights and depths, resound!'"

Rejoice, and set thy mind free; there has been a great mistake. The book, as well as thyself, was injured by the false pretensions set up on its behalf; and the workings of the *Human* mind in remote ages, in themselves deeply interesting, rendered ridiculous by being extolled into oracles of the *Divine*. Cease to weary thyself in following Israel through the desert, and in pondering each supposed weighty sentence of prophets and apostles. Neither Moses nor Samuel, Isaiah nor Zechariah, not Jesus, nor Paul, nor John, can speak more of God than they themselves have learned from the sources which he has placed within the reach of all, nature and man's own mind. But look up and around, and say if man may not be well satisfied with these; and if in Orion and the Pleiades, in the green earth and its copious productions, and especially in the Godlike Human Mind itself, manifested in art, science, poetry, and action, God has not provided eloquent and intelligible evangelists.

True, they tell me that he is; but his Will! where shall I find this, if the book of revelation be renounced; where find rules of conduct of sufficient sanction to render the mind free and trustful in its course through life? Reflecting man cannot live a mere animal, catching whatever good fate or chance throws to him from day to day; he must ask himself sometimes, what is the End of his being, and is he living for that End? Different lines of conduct seem to lie open before him; which shall he choose,—virtue or vice, benevolent or selfish gratification? The omnipotent Designer must have intended man to fulfil some part in his great plan: if man could penetrate into the divine designs, and learn what this plan was, or at least obtain a word of guidance from the Creator's lips, he might proceed surely. Conformity to the will of an arranger so wise as he who made the world, must be for the best interests of man and of all things.

Nor will this question be asked of Nature in vain.

Through her God speaks his will, as well as his existence, in language of inimitable force and clearness. Here also it is the language of facts. He speaks his commands to man in a manner so impressive, that they cannot be neglected, whether they be recognized as his or not. This emphatic language is *Pleasure* and *Pain*. By the former he persuades, by the latter he deters. "Do this" is spoken so that none can refuse; "thus far shalt thou go," and "thou shalt not," are enforced in sentences which the deaf must hear, viz., in Nature's sharp penalties for disobedience.

Here then is the true Table of God's Commandments; the *natural consequences of actions;* the happiness or misery which result respectively from different lines of conduct, according to the constitution of ourselves and of things around: a table written, indeed, with the finger of God, but which no Moses can throw down and break; for it is interwoven with the universe itself, and shares its stability. Let him who desires to know the will of God study well this great table, and in no particular will he find it deficient or ambiguous.

It is true that this Table is so constructed as to teach by experience rather than by warning. Each forbidden fruit does not prevent our tasting it by sharp pains to the palate; but by after-pain it declares itself to be within the prohibited list. Man seems thus to be designedly exposed to some evil. Unlike an over-fond parent, who fears lest her charge should receive the slightest hurt, Nature gives mankind a rough education, and allows them unscrupulously to receive many hurts before they attain their majority. Man's infancy of six thousand years has abounded with disasters; yet Nature has looked on unmoved, tranquilly confident in the ultimate success of her plan; in evidence of which we see she now points to her charge, upon the whole healthy and vigorous, notwithstanding his past troubles, rendered partially wise

and reflective in consequence of them, and shewing a strength of constitution in body and mind which allows the hope of a manhood of perfection.

Is Nature really unkind in preferring this rigorous system of teaching by experience? and do we wish that God had rather made her the minutely solicitous nurse, always warning in time, to prevent our incurring the least physical or moral hurt? Then we might have been entirely unscathed by evil, and for ever safe in leading-strings. But whence should we obtain all those things which seem to be the necessary results of hard experience alone;—patience, fortitude, circumspection, activity of thought, and the full appreciation of pleasure? All these truly are worth something, and help much to make man the being whom we love and respect. Perhaps they are equal in value to that secure invulnerability which we might have had in the total absence of evil,—perhaps more. Should we dare to risk the loss of this moral grandeur, and all that results from it, by accepting, in exchange for this world, one in which evil had never been permitted to appear,—a world already cleared of evil for man, instead of one which he is to clear for himself? The choice would be too hazardous; we might lose more than we should gain: possibly it was neither oversight nor want of benevolence in the Creator, that he allowed the trees both of Good and of Evil to grow within the reach of unrestrained man.

Wonderful and ingenious is the method devised for guiding man into the course which he was intended to fulfil, and at the same time allowing him that range of faculties and action, which contributes to the interest and greatness of his being! Not an enchaining automaton-producing instinct; but Pleasure or Happiness attached to some actions, Pain or Misery to others. How simple the contrivance! yet what a vast machinery of sensations in man and adaptations to external nature did it require!

The Natural Consequences of actions become, then, the Scriptures of God's will concerning the conduct of man. Deeply interesting is the study of this volume, for we read it in every action of our lives, and in all that men and nations enjoy or suffer. Even he who will not himself attend to the meaning, becomes an illustration of it to others. But with the happiness and misery of life the sense must glide more or less into every mind.

Why have mankind profited so little by this volume, that from generation to generation they continue to read again and again the same dark pages of immoderate indulgence, unrestrained passions, and their attendant evils, without going on to those abundant pages of pleasurable experiences to which these difficult passages were to be merely the preparation? Whence this strange inattention? From men's inadvertence to the deep and solemn object of all the Pains and Pleasures to which their minds and bodies are subject; viz., that these are to make known to them God's will, and guide them into the course designed for them. But they have supposed pains and pleasures to be accidents, or mere arbitrary distributions, and have looked every where else for the declaration of God's will; in dreams, or visions, or special messengers from heaven, or supernatural inspirations, or volumes of human compilation pretending to contain the precious oracles. Man's attention has been so engrossed with these loud boasting, counterfeit revelations, that he has neglected Nature, although ever speaking with her own quiet impressiveness through his own feelings and the order of things.

But now lift up thine eyes, free from those illusions which have been so long confusing the sight of mankind, and devote thy hitherto misdirected energies to discover God's will in his own revelation of it. Here also he adopts a magnificent mode of teaching, the feelings of man and the order of events. Thou wilt soon learn his

style in this matter, as well as in the revelation of his existence. 'Tis easier, after all, than the study of Koran, Shasters, Zendavesta, or Bible. Thou wilt sooner discover the tendency of thine actions, and the pleasurableness or painfulness of thy own feelings, than the genuineness and meaning of Hebrew, Greek, or Persic texts. Hast thou ever felt delight in the exercise of thy senses, in the fragrance of the rose and violet, in autumn's fruits, in the freshness of the winding stream beneath overhanging trees, or in the inviting depths of the wood? God commands thee to enjoy all this. Hast thou ever felt the bodily prostration or mental death following upon too long-continued luxurious ease? Then God prohibits this. Hast thou ever found enjoyment in the kindly intercourse with men, in the interchange of good offices, or in the mutual communication of thought and experience, gaiety and wisdom? God commands this. Hast thou ever felt misery from yielding to suspicion, reserve, distrust, and uncharitableness? The prohibition is clear. Hast thou ever found delight in knowledge, in evolving the surprising properties of numbers and quantity, in exploring the history of earth and its productions, in penetrating the firmament and gaining a bird's-eye view of the universe, or in roving through the luxuriance of books? All this God sanctions. Or hast thou sometimes had a sense of a purer delight, and felt the awakening of a new and higher life in the love of moral beauty, the admiration of noble actions, the feeling of disinterested benevolence, the desire to direct all other tastes and powers towards the service of mankind, and to imitate the perfection in heaven by doing good to all sentient creatures? If ever thou hast been convinced that from such feelings proceed a real and substantial delight, then be sure that God approves of these.

But the sufferers for conscience' sake! O plausible semi-epicurean, what shall we say of these? This;—that

they prefer the higher pleasure to the lower, and would not exchange the consciousness of moral worth, of fellowship with the good, and of closer connexion with more than earth, for things, to them, of inferior value. If the bargain seem to any too hard, 'tis nature's indication that they may rest contented with the secondary grade of admiring what they cannot imitate. Yet history shews that, whenever occasion has called for it, numbers have not been found wanting to rush into the foremost rank of Virtue, testifying by their alacrity that some minds are so constituted as to find her rewards a reality.*

With the increasing general improvement of mankind, occasions of this kind will be less and less frequent. Virtue will not be called upon for those high efforts, in which the exaltation of noble feelings must compensate for inconvenience, neglect, and suffering. The general constitution of human nature indicates that virtue is intended to co-exist with the enjoyment of the common blessings of life. The martyr's reward must be considered as an extraordinary provision to meet an extraordinary case; but the more tranquil satisfactions of virtue will be the more permanent. Those generous spirits

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* The possibility, at least, of a future state, cannot be disproved. It is one of the rewards of virtue to reflect, that, in the disposition to create and diffuse good, the mind has acquired a high degree of resemblance to the Divine nature, and that the likeness may include the partaking of its immortality. Thus, although the doctrine of the immortality of the soul be not held as a dogma, the contemplation of it may diffuse a high additional interest to man's existence; and this contemplation becomes most earnest and pleasing to the virtuous sufferer.

Every thing which tends to shew that this contemplation is natural and necessary to the mind, especially amongst the good, tends to prove also the reality of a future state; because the healthy working of human feelings is not found, in other cases, to lead to delusions.

were made for their age; but the last times will behold a world, not of martyrs, but of happiness-enjoying and happiness-giving brethren.

To study the means of *leading a happy life* has been supposed to be the province of philosophy; to ascertain the *will of God*, that of religion. They unite. Too long has the minister of sacred things stood aloof from the moralist, the philosopher, the political economist, as from labourers in a different sphere from his own. Too long has he considered himself as standing apart, and omitted to see that the investigator of Nature in all its provinces is really employed in evolving and translating those texts of God's mighty book, from which he himself is to draw for men ennobling and consoling thoughts. Especially is the philosopher, who investigates the means of individual and national happiness, a fellow-labourer with the religionist; for he is engaged in exploring the will of God where alone it can be found. Behold, then, religion and philosophy unite; they blend into one serene form, delightful to both the intellect and the heart. Christianity, throwing off the contracted look of superstition and exclusive saintship, issues from cathedrals and conventicles, and learns to walk in academic groves and gardens, with free unbending air, and in courteous equality with all mankind.

Shades of Athenian Sages! receive at length with friendly arms your Ally of Nazareth: Reason, after eighteen centuries of labour, has prepared you all to meet each other. Go forth with him into nature's vast lyceum in friendly communion, instructing, correcting, ennobling each other. Let his devotional nature shed upon your researches that high and holy hue which was wanting to render philosophy omnipotent over men's affections, as well as their understanding;—the recognition of the Soul of the World as a principle bearing close relationship to man's heart, and beaming forth through all material things

to the intellectual eye. Let his benign spirit dissolve your proud contempt for the crowd, and dispose you to throw open your philosophic stores to all your brethren of mankind. And he, in his turn, will hear all that you can tell, gathered by deep thought and patient industry from the history of nature and of man, nor refuse to search further with you into the elder universal scripture for all that may reveal God and benefit man.

These latter ages realize the vision. Plato, Epicurus, Cicero, Aristotle, live again in the profound thinkers and patient explorers of modern ages. And whatever was most admirable in the Galilean lives again in the frank benevolence, warm imagination, and unassuming devotion of many a generous, as well as religious, spirit. No longer need they be practically divided by seeking their respective materials of thought in different directions. The works and word of God are the same. They will find themselves inevitably at each other's side, and, exploring in the same field, will soon discover that their objects are alike, and that their spirits may therefore join.

Not altogether fruitless have been the researches already made. The moralist has gathered this result from the experience of mankind, that moderation in all the gratifications of sense, the pursuit of some approved object, the cultivation of the mind's higher powers, and the employment of those powers in such a manner as to bring forth the kindly affections and encourage the love of truth and justice,—that conduct framed according to these rules is the surest means of procuring a happy life to the *individual*, and, at the same time, of promoting the welfare of the *race*. Let but individual man earnestly seek the happiness of his whole nature, and he must of necessity be working towards the happiness of the race. The Creator was not such an inconsistent or unskilful artist as to aim at producing general happiness by a system of individual misery. The character of the means harmo-

nizes with that of the end. The orbit of the smallest satellite obeys the same laws as the widest circle in which systems gravitate.

The self-love which is interwoven with man's constitution will continually impel him to seek happiness of some kind, and advancing knowledge will render more and more necessary the gratification of his moral and intellectual powers. The gratification of his *whole* nature must, in the constituted order of things, tend to the perfection of the race. We begin then to discover a mighty object, worthy of the Framer of nature, in his wonderful apparatus of pleasure and pain, hitherto the most puzzling part of his vast machinery. From amidst the chaos of human error and suffering, we begin to discern glimmerings which announce an Empyrean of beneficent light.

Not yet are we out of the darkness; not yet are self-love and social universally the same. But the general profession, at least, of estimation for the moral sentiments and the pleasures derivable from them, allows us to contemplate the universal verification of the maxim as no impossibility. And when men shall all come to recognize their highest pleasure in diffusing happiness, and shall seek the good of all with as much earnestness as their own; when sincerity shall be as common as profession; and the advanced intellect of mankind be subservient to equally advanced morality;—what a luxuriant scene of happiness may not be anticipated on this earth! General knowledge, united with general benevolence, must banish all relics of crime and misery, and mankind live a happy brotherhood harmoniously occupied in drawing from the earth its copious treasures, exploring further into the secrets of creation, and increasing the stores of mental enjoyment. What may not man become in that happy age?—a being, perhaps, as superior to him of to-day, as the latter is to the preceding occupants of the planet; and then may be further developed

the plan of creation, constituting things so that the happiness of man should be linked with his moral and intellectual progress. Then, whatever joys have been imagined of heaven will be realized upon earth, and a golden age be found to be the result of knowledge, and not of ignorance.*

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* The present now is past,
And those events that desolate the earth
Have faded from the memory of time.
. . . . . Futurity
Exposes now its treasure: let the sight
Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope.

. . . . . .

O happy Earth! reality of Heaven!
To which those restless souls, that ceaselessly
Throng through the human universe, aspire;
Thou consummation of all mortal hope!
Thou glorious prize of blindly working will!
Whose rays, diffused throughout all space and time,
Verge to one point, and blend for ever there:
Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place!
Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime,
Languor, disease, and ignorance dare not come:
O happy Earth, reality of heaven!

Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams,
And dim forebodings of thy loveliness,
Haunting the human heart, have there entwined
Those rooted hopes of some sweet place of bliss
Where friends and lovers meet to part no more.
Thou art the end of all desire and will,
The product of all action; and the souls
That by the paths of an aspiring change
Have reached thy haven of perpetual peace,
There rest from the eternity of toil
That framed the fabric of thy perfectness.

Shelley's Queen Mab.

If it be acknowledged that any progress has hitherto been made in social happiness, it must also be admitted that such a state may be indefinitely approached. Thus all who labour in any department with a purpose to promote the improvement of man, are co-operating in the grand scheme of providence, of preparing for the kingdom of Heaven upon Earth. Thus in a wider sense, perhaps, than he himself imagined, and by the sure means of human effort availing itself of nature's resources, are they gradually realizing the conception of Jesus of Nazareth, and promoting the growth of the mustard-seed, till it become a tree in whose branches the birds shall lodge, when the earth shall be possessed by the children of God, and the Son of Man, perfected human nature, descend to reign upon it as from the clouds of heaven.

Well and nobly, then, do the generous benefactors of mankind, of every sect and nation, perform the most urgent command of the Prophet of Nazareth, to go forth and prepare for the Kingdom of heaven. If he could now return to earth, and add to his own generous spirit all that reason and science have accumulated since his day, would he not be proud to be allowed to call these his disciples, and exclaim,—I call you not servants; ye are my friends. That which, in my day, I thought was to be brought about by miracles, wonders, and signs, ye are accomplishing by the surer means which my Father hath provided in his works. More truly are ye thus my disciples, than if ye were to proclaim me most loudly Lord, and vociferate in my behalf a thousand Heathen or Jewish fictions. He that speaketh even against me, it is forgiven him; but he that doeth the will of my Father is my disciple and friend.

And thou, poor child of mortality, who sufferest thy full share of the afflictions which form part of the education of the race until they attain this happy majority,—canst thou not find part of thy consolation in this glorious

prospect of thy species? From thy corner in the dark vale of the present, let thy sympathetic affections catch a glimpse of the boundless beauty of the future, and rejoice in the telescopic view of millions of thyself, with thy own thoughts and feelings renewed, basking in happiness, and free from all that which clouds thy being. Thou art one small necessary part of the great train of things which is slowly conducting to this consummation; and wouldst thou rather not have been this? Count thy disappointments and pains ever so minutely; is not thy life worth something, if it were only for the sake of looking for a short time upon the glorious spectacle of the universe, and of man's future prospects, with the consciousness that thou bearest a part in the great whole? Thy small atom of experience and action contributes to build up that immense bank, on which will be based the fertile island of man's future perfection. For thy individual self, trust that the wisdom and benevolence which appears in the general arrangements of creation include all that is really wise and benevolent on behalf of individuals. The Creating Mind hath seemed to be not devoid of what is best in the human; trust, then, that there is something in him which looks with peculiar interest on patient suffering worth, and that he hath not neglected to provide for that which would be the first care of a benevolent mortal. Trust in him, and disdain to ask a reward. Feelest thou nothing in thee which prompts thee both to do and suffer in the cause of mankind, without any other reward than what thy own breast affords? Importune not God with mercenary requests to add another mite to thy treasure in heaven; but do good, hoping for nothing again. Let God be witness that thou canst be generous, and do good, without even casting a beggar's look to himself for recompence. Nevertheless, rejoice that all nature proclaims the Creator of sympathizing nature with every generous spirit; and thus learn

to see in all that is serene and lovely in earth and skies the approving smile of heaven.

Fear not, then, to regard this earth as the appointed sphere of man's chief thoughts, exertions, and interests. To enjoy and promote happiness on this planet is the simple and pleasing obligation laid upon him by the Creator through the irresistible voice of his own constitution. If he obey nature, and frame his whole conduct according to her easy command, developed in details as enlightened intellect may suggest, he is sure to be promoting the end of his being. Man is no exception to the rule of animated existence; the work for which he was created, he is also impelled to perform by nature's pleasing enforcements. Away with the glooms of false religion, austerities, seclusions, useless self-denials, and voluntary martyrdoms: God, through nature, *commands man to lead a happy life.* Obey God thyself, and assist others to obey him. In alternate study, action, business, sport, or repose, regulated according to the index of understanding placed in thyself for the purpose, let the consciousness of thy pleasing obedience diffuse a perpetual sunshine over the path of life. Indulge thyself especially, as far as it is given thee, in the enjoyment which God himself seems to delight in, of creating happiness. And when the foreseen signal of departure arrives, give a glance of contented retrospection on a well-spent and well-enjoyed life, welcome the new comers into thy place, and sink peacefully into nature's arms.

More is there than this? Nature is silent. Enough has she given man to occupy him on earth; she withdraws not yet the veil from what lies beyond, but bids him wait in calm implicit faith. Or if, pressed urgently by the affections which she herself has implanted in him, man seems to acquire a right to some answer, and demands if the friend of many years is now really no more than a remembrance,—she points with quiet signi-

ficance to man's own heart, and to her own continual lesson, that the creator of that heart is good. Man takes consolation from the hint: amongst the white memorials of mortality he finds thought still pleasing, though solemn and severe, and, amidst yew and cypress shades, catches animating glimpses of the remote bright stars and serene heaven. Spirits of the wise and good! noblest work of all creation! are ye not worth preserving in the sight of God? The wisdom and benevolence which shine forth in all that we can already see of the universe, suggest, that for you there is still some place to occupy, and some work to be done, in the immense regions of the unseen.

Nature thus can never fail to speak philosophy and religion to those who intently seek her; and to her great revelation must all mankind ultimately recur.

The various existing religions, in so far as they are based upon fictitious revelations, lose authority by every addition made to man's knowledge and powers of thought; numbers must, therefore, fall off from every sect into the increasing multitude of those who seek for truth in Nature, and admit the authority of her volume alone.

If names be necessary, let THEISM compendiously express the opinions of those who seek God in his works alone.

Of these, many, from attachment to the faith of their forefathers, from respect for the man who, in an early

age, breathed forth so much of the pure spirit of religion and benevolence, and from reverence for that faith which, when viewed apart from the vices of its professors, has done much to humanize mankind,—may wish to retain the name of Christian. There is no incongruity in the junction. Christ was a Theist, inasmuch as he drew much of his doctrine from his own observation of God's works. And the Theist who imbibes the love of God and of man from the same source, often finds himself almost unconsciously adopting the words of Christ. Let CHRISTIAN THEISM then express the feelings of him, who, whilst he admits no authority above that of man's reason, and no revelation besides that of nature, yet listens to and honours one of the best expounders of God and Nature in the Man of Nazareth.

Theists of every nation, Christian, Jew, Mahometan, or Chinese, can meet upon common ground. Whatever minor predilection each may entertain for his own most eminent teacher or prophet, whether Christ, Mahomet, Moses, or Confucius, their great principle is the same,—to seek the knowledge of the Universal Mind, and rules for the guidance of man, in the great volume stretched out before all men. And when men come generally to discover that all have been thus set on a level for the acquisition of this knowledge, religion, instead of being allied with ignorance, exclusiveness, and dogmatism, will be found in closest union with modesty, benevolence, and science. No longer will it be supposed to consist in absurd tales and incomprehensible mysteries, but it will be the expression of Nature's highest truths, and the hymn ascending from a grateful Earth to a beneficent Heaven.

APPENDIX.

Page 11.—*The name which, in reference to the future kingdom, was assumed by him.*

IT is generally agreed by Christian commentators that the word Christ, Χριστος, signifies *anointed*, and is synonymous with the Hebrew or Syriac *Messias*, derived from *maschach*, to anoint.

Martinii Lexicon Philologicum:—"Χριστος is the participle from Χριω, in the same way as *unctus*, from *ungo*. Irenæus, l. 3, cap. 20: 'In Christi nomine subauditur qui unxit, et ipse unctus est, et ipsa unctio,' &c. *Messias* is a Syriac word with a Greek termination."

Stephani Thesaurus on the word Χριστος:—"Our Saviour is pre-eminently designated by this name in the sense known to the Jews, since he was, in truth, Priest, Prophet, and King. For, amongst them, those three classes of men alone used to be anointed with sacred oil, as appears from Leviticus xvi. 10, which treats of the anointing of the High Priest; 1st Kings, xix., the anointing of Elisha as prophet in the room of Elijah; and 1 Samuel, x., the anointing of Saul as King of the Israelites. See also the anointing of David as King, 1 Sam. xvi., 2 Sam. ii. & v.; and of Solomon, 1 Kings, i.* The Latin writers preferred to retain the Greek appellation *Christus* rather than to substitute the Latin *unctus* or *delibutus*. Lactantius says, lib. iv. cap. 7, "But the meaning of the name must be explained on account of the error of those ignorant persons, who, by changing a letter, call it *Chrestus*. The Jews were commanded to make a sacred ointment wherewith to anoint those who were called to the priesthood or the kingdom: and as, now, the purple is the ensign of royalty amongst the Romans, so, amongst them, the anointing with the sacred ointment conferred the royal name and authority. But since the ancient Greeks used the verb Χρισθαι for *to be anointed*, instead of the present one αλειφισθαι, we call him *Christus*, i. e. anointed, which, in Hebrew, is *Messiah*. Whence it is, that in some Greek scriptures,

* Χριστος applied to Cyrus, Isaiah xlv. 1.

translated badly from the Hebrew, we find written ηλειμενος, i. e. *ungendo curatus*, from αλειφεσθαι. However, either word signifies a King; not, indeed, that he obtained an earthly kingdom, the time for which is not yet come, but a heavenly and eternal one.' In the New Testament, the word Χριστος occurs frequently, both by itself and in conjunction with Jesus, as Ιησους ὁ Χριστος. In Daniel ix. it stands alone, εως Χριστου ηγεμονος, unto Christ the Prince: where also it is said, του σφραγισαι οραση και προφητειαν και του χρισαι ἁγιον ἁγιων, to seal up the vision and prophecy, and *anoint* the holy of holies."

Stephanus gives abundant instances of the use of the verb χριω, and of its derivatives, χριστος, χρισμα, &c., in the sense of anointing or smearing, *ungo, lino,* seu *perungo, inungo, oblino, illino,* amongst Greek authors, viz.: Homer, Xenophon, Euripides, Theocritus, Dioscorides, Philoxenus, &c.

The Jews applied the term *Messiah,* or *anointed,* to their expected deliverer long before Jesus appeared. The Septuagint, made about three centuries before his time, gives χριστος as the translation of this word, and the verb χριω, with its derivations used in a similar sense, was very common amongst Greek authors from the earliest times. The origin of the application of the name Christ to Jesus seems, therefore, to be very satisfactorily established, in conformity with the unanimous testimony of the Christian church.

But Volney, Dupuis, and others, neglect this derivation of the name, and suppose it to be a corruption of some ancient appellation of the Sun. Volney says, ch. xxii. sect. 13, "The mythological traditions maintain that he (the Sun) was called sometimes *Chris,* or Conservator; and hence the Hindoo God, *Chris-en* or *Christna;* and the Christian *Chris-tos,* the Son of Mary;" which is supported thus in a note, "*Chris,* or *Conservator.* The Greeks used to express by X, the aspirated *hê* of the Orientals, who said *hâris.* In Hebrew, *heres* signifies the sun; but, in Arabic, the meaning of the radical word is, to guard, to preserve, and of *hâris,* guardian, preserver."

This is far from satisfactory, and cannot set aside the clear explanation quoted above; even though we should admit that some of the traditions respecting the Divinities representing the Sun came to be applied to Jesus Christ.

Of the Hindoo God *Crishna,* Sir W. Jones gives the following account (Works, 4to, vol. i. p. 278): "That the name of Crishna, and the general outline of his story, were long anterior to the birth of our Saviour, and probably to the time of Homer, we know very certainly.*

* In Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 426, he gives some reasons for fixing the date of Crishna's appearance, real or imagined, about 1200 years before Christ.

Yet the celebrated poem entitled Bhágavat,* which contains a prolix account of his life, is filled with narratives of a most extraordinary kind, but strangely variegated and intermixed with poetical decorations. The incarnate deity of the Sanscrit romance was cradled among herdsmen; he was educated among them, and passed his youth in playing with milk-maids. A tyrant, at the time of his birth, ordered all new-born male infants to be slain; yet this wonderful babe was preserved in an extraordinary manner from a nurse commissioned to kill him. He performed amazing but ridiculous miracles in his infancy, and, at the age of seven years, held up a mountain on the tip of his little finger: he saved multitudes, partly by his arms and partly by his miraculous powers; he raised the dead by descending for that purpose to the lowest regions; he was the meekest and best-tempered of beings, washed the feet of the Brahmans, and preached very nobly indeed, and sublimely, but always in their favour; he was pure in reality, but exhibited an appearance of libertinism; lastly, he was benevolent and tender, yet fomented and conducted a terrible war. This motley story must induce an opinion that the spurious gospels which abounded in the first age of Christianity had been brought to India, and the wildest parts of them repeated to the Hindoos, who engrafted them on the old fable of *Cesava*, the Apollo of Greece." He says, in another place, that the meaning of the word Crishna is *dark-blue*, approaching to *black*, which is supposed to have been his complexion; and hence the large bee of that colour is consecrated to him.

Captain Wilford adds to the foregoing account, "The Yadus, his own tribe and nation, were doomed to destruction for their sins;" and "the real name of Crishna was Caneya, and he was surnamed Crishna, or the *black*, on account of his complexion."

From all this there appears no reason to suppose that the name Christ was borrowed from Crishna, or that the two had a common origin. Christos, in Greek, signified *anointed;* and Crishna, with the Hindoos, *black*. The many rude resemblances between the story of the Hindoo God, and the Gospel accounts of Jesus, especially that of Matthew, may be explained by supposing that the similarity of the names, of itself a mere coincidence, led both the Hindoos and the Christians to borrow from each other, parts of the stories relating to the two objects of worship. It seems probable, however, that in the greater part of these resemblances the Hindoos were the plagiarists.

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* The Bhágavat is the last of the eighteen Puranas, of which Captain Wilford says (Essay on the Origin and Decline of the Christian Religion in India, Asiatic Researches, vol. x.), "Every one of the Puranas is much later than our æra; though many legends, and the materials in general, certainly existed before, in some other shape.

Page 37.—*In what language should God have written his message?*

"Au lieu de suspendre un soleil dans la voûte du firmament; au lieu de répandre sans ordre les étoiles et les constellations qui remplissent l'espace, n'eût-il pas été plus conforme aux vues d'un Dieu si jaloux de sa gloire, et si bien intentionné pour l'homme, d'écrire d'une façon non sujette à dispute, son nom, ses attributs, ses volontés permanentes, en caractères ineffaçables, et lisibles également pour tous les habitans de la terre?"—*Système de la Nature.*

Page 49.—*Some principle not manifesting itself apart from matter.*

The objections of reputed Atheists apply chiefly to the idea of a Demi-urgus or creating God, distinct from the universe itself. Shelley says that his negation of a God must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity, and that the hypothesis of a pervading Spirit, coeternal with the universe, remains unshaken.

Theism is not limited to the belief in an artificer who, at a certain time, created the material world from nothing. It recognizes an intelligent principle, which causes material things to be in the form which we see; but whether this principle operates by successive acts of creation, or by a perpetually influencing presence, or both, is a separate and more difficult consideration. The Soul or Spirit of the Universe, considered as a mind animating and regulating it, as the human mind does the body, is an idea which gives rise to the religious sentiments, in as great a degree, probably, as that of a strictly creative agent.

Page 59.—*Dante relates, &c.*

On referring to the passage, Paradiso, Canto 33, after this note was gone to press, I have found that the meaning of Dante was, probably, to shadow forth the second person of the Trinity. He would, doubtless, excuse an inaccuracy which makes his splendid imagery serve a further purpose than it was at first intended for.

Page 65.—*The zeal which wastes itself in mis-directed missionary exertion.*

Sir W. Jones says (Works, vol. i. p. 279), "As to the general extension of our pure faith in Hindostan, there are at present many sad obstacles to it. The Mussulmen are already a sort of heterodox Christians: they are

Christians, if Locke reasons justly, because they believe firmly the immaculate conception, divine character, and miracles of the Messiah; but they are heterodox in denying vehemently his character of Son, and his equality as God with the Father, of whose unity and attributes they entertain and express the most awful ideas; while they consider our doctrine as perfect blasphemy, and insist that our copies of the Scriptures have been corrupted both by Jews and Christians. It will be inexpressibly difficult to undeceive them, and scarcely possible to diminish their veneration for Mohammed and Ali, who were both very extraordinary men, and the second a man of unexceptionable morals. The Koran shines, indeed, with a borrowed light, since most of its beauties are taken from our Scriptures; but it has great beauties, and the Mussulmen will not be convinced that they were borrowed. The Hindoos, on the other hand, would readily admit the truth of the Gospel; but they contend that it is perfectly consistent with their Sastras: the Deity, they say, has appeared innumerable times, in many parts of this world, and of all worlds, for the salvation of his creatures; and though we adore him in one appearance, and they in another, yet we adore, they say, the same God, to whom our several worships, though different in form, are equally acceptable, if they be sincere in substance. We may assure ourselves, that neither Mussulmen nor Hindoos will ever be converted by any mission from the church of Rome, or any church; and the only human mode, perhaps, of causing so great a revolution, will be to translate into Sanscrit and Persian such chapters of the Prophets, particularly of Isaiah, as are indisputably evangelical, together with one of the Gospels, and a plain prefatory discourse containing full evidence of the very distant ages in which the predictions themselves, and the history of the divine person predicted, were made public; and then quietly to disperse the work among the well-educated natives, with whom, if in due time it failed of producing very salutary fruit by its natural influence, we could only lament more than ever the strength of prejudice, and the weakness of unassisted reason."

G. SMALLFIELD, PRINTER, 69, NEWGATE-STREET.